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ABSTRACT

This handbook serves as a guide to "Talk Time," a technique for volunteer facilitators to use to help newcomers to the United States practice English in a comfortable, non-threatening setting. Talk Time provides language practice activity often not found in traditional English-as-a-Second-Language classroom settings. In Talk Time, no one assumes the teacher role; instead facilitators provide opportunities for students to share cultural and personal information relevant to the group of limited English speakers so they communicate using more English. The objective of Talk Time is to generate as much conversation as the language learner can manage using the English they have already acquired. This guide provides an introduction to Talk Time and information on Talk Time program planning and design, program management, volunteer recruitment and screening, participant recruitment, volunteer support, assessment and evaluation, and session management and planning. Profiles of three Talk Time programs are included. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education/JL)

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Talk Time Handbook

Conversation Sessions for Volunteer Facilitators and Limited English Speaking Participants

FL 801128

Tacoma Community House Training Project
and
The National Institute for Literacy

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Talk Time Handbook

Conversation Sessions for Volunteer Facilitators and Limited English Speaking Participants

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Distributed by the National Institute for Literacy

Tacoma Community House Training Project

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PREFACE

HISTORY

Talk Time began in 1982 at John Knox Presbyterian Church in Normandy Park, Washington. After observing a Talk Time session, the Tacoma Community House Training Project (TCHTP) staff believed that the concept of a group-based conversational opportunity for newly arrived refugees using volunteer facilitators could be replicated throughout the state. The TCHTP staff also believed that Talk Time had value as an additional program model to tutoring. Those involved in the original Talk Time graciously allowed the TCHTP staff to borrow the concept. The first *Talk Time Coordinator Handbook*, developed in 1983 by the TCHTP, served as a guide for programs wanting to start a Talk Time and focused on the refugee situation in the 1980's. This revised version reflects the growing number of variations within Talk Time programs since 1983.

Talk Time programs flourish in different settings. Most commonly, a volunteer ESL tutor program decides to add a Talk Time component to its existing services. However, sometimes the need to start a Talk Time program emerges from another type of organization or the community. For example, some classroom-based adult education programs have decided to begin a Talk Time with volunteers on campus as a supplement for the ESL classes or as a weekly component of a class. Regardless of the specific situation, Talk Time must be organized and managed as a separate program.

Since 1983, with primary funding from the Washington State Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, the Training Project has provided support to over 40 volunteer Talk Time programs by offering the original *Talk Time Coordinator Handbook*, consulting with program coordinators, and providing on-going training for volunteer facilitators and coordinators. While the concept of Talk Time has gone beyond state borders, the purpose of this revised handbook remains the same: to guide organizations through the steps to develop a successful Talk Time program. While getting people together to talk sounds simple, good programs thrive because of careful planning and time spent early in the development of the program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This handbook represents over ten years of tremendous Talk Time growth and evolution throughout the state of Washington. Several Talk Time programs assisted in this project by sharing their successes and challenges in developing and maintaining successful Talk Time programs. Many thanks for their generous and knowledgeable help go to Ellen Shortt at Mason County Literacy and to the King County Literacy Coalition / AmeriCorps sites: Judy Potter, Anne Troy, and Mable Updegrove at Bellevue Community College; Chris Koehler and Ann Strandoo at St. James ESL Program; Noah Leavitt and Jane Flottmeyer at South Seattle Community College; and Anne Helmholz and Anie Sklar at Literacy Action Center. The examples and advice found in this handbook are composites based on the information collected from numerous seasoned Talk Time providers over the years so that you can benefit from the lessons learned.

We wish to thank the National Institute For Literacy's AmeriCorps subgrantee, the King County Literacy Coalition directed by Edith Gower, for its financial support of this project. The Coalition's AmeriCorps members have not only increased the number of participants in their local Talk Time programs but also inspired other programs to develop, making the need for this handbook even more urgent.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Birch Street Center is the name used throughout the book on sample forms to represent a composite of many Talk Time programs. We intentionally created forms with the Birch Street Center logo to provide an example of an individual program's forms. Please feel free to use any part of the forms which seems useful for your program.

After long discussion, we settled on the term "participants" to describe the limited English speaking Talk Time members throughout the text. We chose not to use students because it implies that Talk Time is a teaching situation, while participants connotes active and equal involvement in the program and the special relationship between volunteer facilitators and the non-native English speaking partners. We use the word "facilitator" to more accurately depict the role of the volunteers during Talk Time. They do not tutor. Rather, they foster and encourage conversation. We recommend that you carefully consider which terms to use in your Talk Time promotional material to best describe both your participants and your facilitators.

INTRODUCTION TO TALK TIME

DESCRIPTION

Talk Time: on-going conversation sessions connecting volunteer facilitators and newcomers to the United States to practice whatever English language they have with sympathetic listeners in a comfortable, non-threatening setting. It is the perfect place to ask questions and share experiences. It is often the only place participants can express spontaneous speech. Friendships are formed and cultures shared as both facilitators and limited English speakers struggle to get their meanings across.

One Cambodian farmer explained Talk Time this way:
"In school, the English is in my head.
Here, it's in my mouth."

PURPOSE

Talk Time provides a special language practice activity not often available in ESL classroom settings. In Talk Time, no one assumes the teacher role. Facilitators do not teach lessons on structured speech so the participants will speak better English. Instead, they provide opportunities to share cultural and personal information relevant to the group of limited English speakers so they communicate using **more** English. Language learning theory suggests that the opportunity to practice oral English in a non-threatening situation is essential to language acquisition. New language learners must have some time to just talk to others - without fear of making mistakes - about important personal and cultural information. Without this time, their English will remain in their heads, not in their mouths.

Facilitators use any means possible to set up situations in which limited English speakers will want to use the English they have. Communicating meaning becomes much more valuable than the form of the conversation.

While each language learner may be limited in how effectively she can express ideas, the objective of Talk Time is to generate as much conversation as the language learner can manage using the English she already has acquired. The focus on comprehension may often look quite intense and spectacular. Communication is achieved by demonstration, use of pictures, gestures, drawings, mime, smiles, and great intuitive leaps!

Benefits For Limited English Speakers

Talk Time provides a non-critical, low-risk supportive environment for limited English speakers to:

- practice the English speaking skills they have already learned
- exchange cultural and personal information and experiences
- gain an awareness of their immediate community
- increase their confidence to communicate in English more often in different settings and with different people

Benefits For Volunteer Facilitators

Talk Time offers volunteer facilitators the opportunity to:

- support a limited English-speaker's use of English language in a social setting
- exchange information and experiences with people of other cultures
- help limited English speakers connect with the community
- help limited English speakers feel comfortable communicating with fluent English speakers
- meet other people with similar interests

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM PLANNING

Talk Time Staff

Providing a setting for conversational English appears to be a relatively simple service to provide. However, the first question that must be addressed before any program planning occurs is whether someone has enough time to manage a Talk Time program and the sessions. Most groups find that coordinating a Talk Time program requires about 10 - 15 staff hours per week to manage ten volunteers in a 2-hour weekly Talk Time session with additional hours for session planning. At this point, some groups choose to reconsider developing a Talk Time program if they do not have adequate staff support. Some possible sources of staff include:

- college interns
- work study participants
- state service corps members
- VISTA volunteers
- AmeriCorps members
- sponsoring agency or college staff
- specially recruited volunteers

■ Staff Job Descriptions

Talk Time usually develops as an additional service that a volunteer ESL tutor program decides to offer the community, but managing a Talk Time requires added staff time that can be divided between two different positions: Talk Time Program Manager and Session Coordinator. In volunteer ESL tutor programs, the program coordinator often assumes the additional role of managing the new Talk Time component. The Talk Time session coordination tasks are given to another staff person or specially recruited volunteers. No matter who becomes responsible for actually implementing Talk Time, the list of tasks for developing a successful program is long. The Talk Time Program Manager and Session Coordinator job descriptions will give you a realistic framework to define your new role or give you the basis for following a recruitment process to locate, attract, and keep another competent person - paid or volunteer - to do the job.

TALK TIME PROGRAM MANAGER
JOB DESCRIPTION

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

Overview:
Manage and oversee the Talk Time Program. Talk Time is an opportunity to meet and talk with people from around the world and to learn about different cultures. Talk Time volunteers facilitate conversation in a social setting, exchange information and experiences with people of other cultures, and help non-native speakers feel comfortable talking to Americans by creating a non-critical, accepting and informal environment.

Responsibilities on a regular basis:
- recruits limited English speakers and conducts participant intake
- assesses participants' English speaking level
- recruits and screens prospective volunteer facilitators
- presents orientation for new volunteers
- provides Talk Time training
- maintains contact with volunteers about schedules and needs
- supports and recognizes the volunteers
- supervises Talk Time Session Coordinator
- maintains Talk Time records and reports on program activities
- conducts long range planning with input from the Session Coordinator, volunteer facilitators, and participants.
- evaluates the program and participants
- arranges for space for Talk Time sessions
- communicates with others who are indirectly related but essential to the program; e.g. providers of the physical space for Talk Time, teachers who have current or former Talk Time participants, and funding sources

Responsibilities on a quarterly or annual basis:
- organizes Talk Time materials
- assembles and updates manuals
- copies phone lists, schedules, and flyers
- creates job descriptions

Qualifications:
- significant experience working as part of a larger organization
- demonstrated success communicating effectively with the public
- experience with multicultural populations and sensitivity to cultural differences
- demonstrated organizational skills
- experience managing volunteers, supervising staff, and / or working with multi-level ESL classes preferred

Salary / Responsible to:

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TALK TIME SESSION COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

Overview:
Assist the Talk Time Program Manager in the overall operation of Talk Time. Plan and conduct the weekly Talk Time sessions. Talk Time is a special language learning activity to help people from diverse ethnic, national and linguistic backgrounds become more comfortable using their newly acquired English skills. It provides an opportunity to practice conversational English with sympathetic listeners in an informal, supportive setting.

Responsibilities:
- conducts session planning meetings with Talk Time members
- determines themes and develops materials with input from participants
- conducts weekly Talk Time sessions
  - sets up facilities for each session
  - brings in needed visuals, objects, etc.
  - helps with nametags
  - greets people as they arrive
  - maintains an attendance list
  - directs participants to their appropriate groups
- leads debriefing meetings with facilitators following each Talk Time session
- assists Talk Time Program Manager with long range planning
- discusses issues and concerns with Talk Time Program Manager
- assists Talk Time Program Manager with collecting program and student evaluation information
- submits information and documentation for reports and records

Qualifications:
- experience with multicultural populations
- demonstrated organizational skills
- demonstrated ability to work well with others in a team
- understanding of the challenges that ESL students experience
- ability to pursue a project through to completion
- flexibility
- sensitivity to cultural differences
- self-motivated
- TESOL certificate or other ESL teacher training preferred
- Talk Time volunteer facilitator experience preferred

Salary / Responsible to:

Needs Assessment

Conducting the needs assessment is the next step in the planning process. First, find answers to the following questions to determine the need and focus of your program. Then jot down the names of people who can help answer the questions. Decide on the best way to get that information from them - phone call, visit, questionnaire, interpreter, etc. Once you've gathered enough information, you're ready to make the first program design decisions based on who you prioritize to become the focus of your Talk Time.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

Do I have the time to do all the program management work, or must I hire or recruit a volunteer to do it?		
Do I have enough support from the agency or program for this new Talk Time component?		
Who needs the practice speaking English in my community?	Korean wives of military personnel	newly arrived refugees
Why do they need it?	to socialize, become more independent, and enter the workforce	to access basic resources, *increase confidence & comfort in using English, explore cultural issues
What issues are they facing?	children growing up / leaving home, isolation, change in family roles	culture shock and adjustment, lack of social contacts in the community, lack of information
What level of English do they speak?	limited speaking skills developed outside of school, low literacy	mixed, with diverse educational backgrounds
Where do they live?	near army base and also in the south end	housing project near Birch Street Center
Where can the sessions be held?	Korean Women's Association or church	housing project or Birch Street Center

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Mission Statement

Mission statements describe the service being offered, the recipients, and the reason for the service. Altogether, the mission statement articulates the rationale for the program's existence. Carefully develop the elements of a mission statement for your program; be as descriptive as possible to accurately reflect your philosophy. This statement will become the guide for all the further program and management decisions.

■ Our Talk Time Program provides ***what*** for ***whom*** so they can ***why***.

Here are some samples of mission statements:

Talk-Time Provides:

- a safe, non-threatening, relaxed environment to practice newly acquired English speaking skills
- a place to connect with the local community
- an opportunity to converse in a social setting, exchanging information and experiences with people of other cultures
- a comfortable place to discuss topics of interest and issues of concern

For:

- refugees and immigrants looking for employment
- people on the waiting list to attend community college ESL classes
- a diverse group of non-native English speakers
- newcomers to the United States who are new speakers of English
- non-native English speaking mothers who are available during the day
- non-native English speaking adults who live and work in this county

So They Can:

- communicate more confidently on the job
- feel confident caring for their children in the community
- improve their speaking and listening skills
- gain confidence communicating in English to participate more fully in daily life
- feel more comfortable speaking with fluent English speakers

The mission statement becomes the guiding light for many program design elements. For example, a Talk Time program designed to meet the needs of people hoping to enter the workforce soon will look very different from a Talk Time program with a focus on refugee mothers in a housing project. All the design factors - when and where you hold the Talk Time sessions, the topics to discuss, and whom you choose to be the volunteer facilitators - will be determined by the goals of the participants. Non-native English speaking mothers need to gain the confidence to use more English so they can participate more fully in daily life, as will learners soon to be in the workforce. But what the two groups talk about, when they talk, and to whom will vary greatly and must be decided upon in order to create a successful program.

The completed So They Can statement determines the plan for assessing success. If the definition of a successful program is one that accomplishes the mission for most of the participants, then the indicators of success will vary depending on the needs and interests of the participants. For example, refugee mothers in a housing project may want to become more involved with their children's schools. After deciding what increased involvement looks like, you can begin to assess the effect of participation in Talk Time. Determine how to measure the change in the mothers' comfort level talking with their children's teachers and plan how you will collect this information. For people about to enter the workforce, the assessment may include how confident the learners say they feel going into an interview. The key to it all, of course, is whether or not the participants speak more of their newly acquired English. The challenge comes in first figuring out how the change that happens to the participants can be demonstrated and then creating Talk Time sessions that foster communication. See PARTICIPANT EVALUATION page 65

PROGRAM DESIGN

You now know which participants you can best serve and their goals for Talk Time. Before following the urge to recruit volunteers and participants, it's time to make specific decisions about how your program will look. By referring to the mission statement, you will be able to start determining the schedule, size, site, and setting.

Program Schedule:

The time of day, the length of a session, and how often each session meets in one year will all be affected by information about the needs of the people you will be serving. Typically, programs meet once a week for 1 ½ - 2 hours. Also many programs schedule Talk Time on a quarterly basis to give everyone a break. Here are the questions that need answers before you begin:

When will the Talk Time sessions happen?

How long will they last?

Will we take breaks during the year?

When will I schedule time for long-range planning?

When will I train and orient new volunteers?

When will sharing and debriefing time with the volunteers occur?

When will I acknowledge the efforts of the volunteers?

Size:

Plan to serve a modest number of participants at first. Then decide your ratio of volunteers to limited English speakers. Most programs have a ratio of 1:1 to 1:6. Knowing the number of participants and choosing an ideal participant to facilitator ratio determines the number of volunteers you will need to recruit.

How big do I want the program to start?

How big do I want the program to become?

What's the ideal ratio of facilitators to participants?

Site / Setting:

Before recruiting your Talk Time participants, locate a meeting site which is easily accessible to your group and offers flexible space to meet your program's needs.

Where will I hold the sessions?

Will the participants be coming by car, bus, or on foot?

Is it accessible to the participants?

Is the space comfortable and inviting?

If not, can it be turned into a comfortable and inviting place?

Does it have chairs and tables?

Is it big enough - one large room or several smaller rooms or both?

Does it have storage space?

Does it have kitchen access for snacks and parties?

Is it noise tolerant?

Does it have flexible space so that different kinds of activities can be planned?

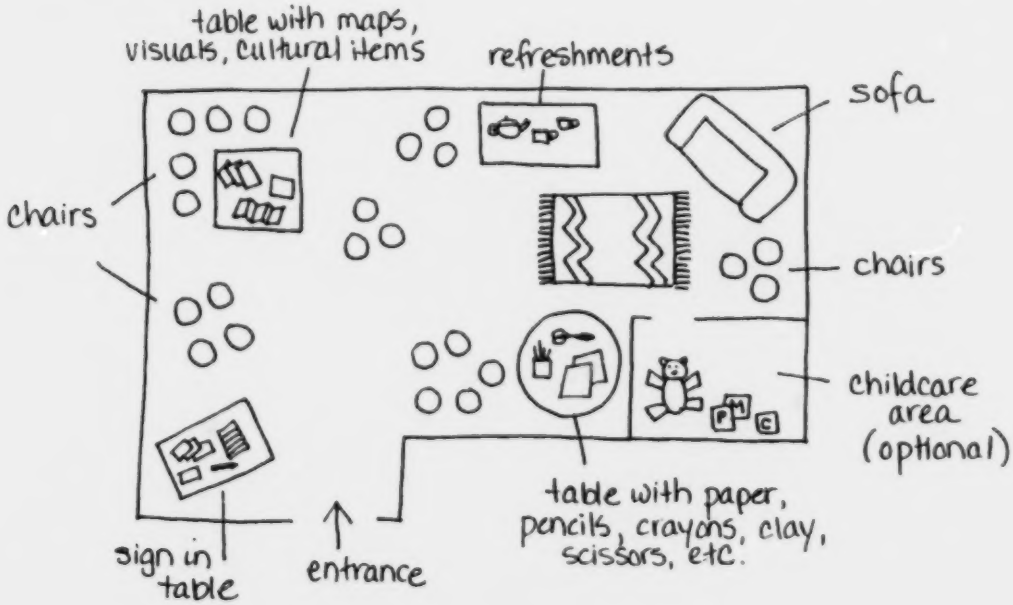
Does it have minimum distractions?

Possible Locations for Talk Time:

- community colleges and universities - both on and off campus sites
- local restaurants
- neighborhood public housing buildings
- participants' workplaces
- public libraries
- public schools
- school district administration buildings
- social service agencies
- sponsoring agency

In programs that use someone else's space for Talk Time, the Talk Time manager must spend some time developing and maintaining a successful relationship with the space provider. Showing thanks to the organization offering space for Talk Time is thoughtful and goes a long way to strengthen that relationship. Thank you notes, an annual donation, and public expressions of thanks in newsletters and at large gatherings are examples of what can be done.

Talk Time needs to be offered at a time most convenient for your participants in an attractive and comfortable setting and site. For example, if your program hopes to focus on participants interested in employment, hold your sessions downtown in the daytime so participants can take short field trips to businesses and volunteers can include local employees. Or, with a different group of participants, you may offer Talk Time at a neighborhood library in the evening when most of them are finished with work and dinner. Or if you want to have a family oriented Talk Time focusing on refugee mothers who are available most of the day, then you might hold your sessions during the day near the housing project with child care available. Extra liability insurance may be necessary to have children on-site. While it requires additional energy, coordination, patience, and space, some participants may welcome the service. The arrangements you make for site and services should reflect your overall program goals.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

You may think, "Well, now I've planned my Talk Time program. I'll just get some volunteers to come and do it. Simple. How hard can it be?" Actually, you've only just begun. Getting and keeping great volunteers and managing the program involves a great deal of time. Over the next few pages, you will find both a focused recruitment scheme and a screening process followed by ideas for training and supporting your volunteers. After laying this firm foundation, you can comfortably begin to place confident volunteers and eager language learners into your well organized and consistent program. Presenting the picture of a quality program will actually attract volunteers and participants to your Talk Time and keep them happily involved.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

You want to recruit the people most likely to be great facilitators who have the qualities you want and who are able to do the job. Getting and keeping good facilitators takes time initially, but saves enormous amounts of time in the long run and maintains the quality of the program. Great facilitators who are well supported will stay active in your program longer and become your best referral source for new volunteers.

This volunteer recruitment scheme guides you through a process to generate very specific ideas for finding ideal volunteer Talk Time facilitators. Gather together a group of friends, current volunteers, and colleagues to brainstorm more quickly and easily the largest assortment of ideas for your community.

WHAT is the job you're expecting the volunteers to do?

TALK TIME
VOLUNTEER FACILITATOR
JOB DESCRIPTION

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

Overview:
Talk Time is an opportunity to meet and talk with people from around the world and to learn about different cultures. Talk Time volunteers facilitate conversation in a social setting, exchange information and experiences with people of other cultures, and help non-native speakers feel comfortable talking to Americans by creating a non-critical, accepting and informal environment.

Responsibilities:
- attend Talk Time orientation and training
- attend Talk Time 2 hours each week
- notify program as soon as you learn you can't attend a Talk Time session
- participate in session planning meetings

Qualifications:
- ability to elicit responses from newcomers
- patience, creativity, and willingness to use a variety of methods to promote communication
- sensitivity to potential differences in culture
- willingness to listen more than talk
- desire to develop friendships with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures
- good sense of humor
- commitment to lead sessions for 6 months

Benefits:
- achieve broader cultural understanding
- help people acquire skills for self sufficiency through supportive relationships with limited English speakers

WHAT are the ideal qualities of Talk Time facilitators?

Successful Talk Time programs have discovered that good Talk Time facilitators possess special skills and qualities including:

- patience
- the facility for listening and drawing out
- a talent for resisting the urge to fill any silence with their own voice
- the desire to reach for communication
- willingness to work toward mutual comprehension
- a tolerant ear that can decipher an assortment of sounds and make English words appear
- a reluctance to have conversations end with polite smiles and no comprehension

Good facilitators are also comfortable knowing that communication-driven language practice, however imperfect, is invaluable to language acquisition. Here's a long composite list of desired qualities of an ideal Talk Time facilitator:

- open-minded
- non-judgmental
- a good listener
- patient
- flexible
- interested in other cultures and places
- humorous
- accepting of cultural differences
- encouraging and promoting of a safe environment
- willing to be involved in a group project
- excited to learn from others
- willing to assist new learners in a manner consistent with Talk Time
- able to get participants to open-up and share what they have to say and what they want to learn
- interested in education and how it applies to people's lives
- confident, not needy
- committed to the schedule
- welcoming

WHO would be most likely to have the desired qualities and be able to do the job?

Considering your program's mission, focus, location, and time, decide who might be available during the time you need Talk Time facilitators. Often the biggest factor for finding volunteers becomes who is available during the day and who is available at night. The types of people available to volunteer day or night often fall into these categories:

Daytime
retired
women with children
working people with flexible schedules
students

Evening
working professionals
retired
students

Imagine a very specific, clear profile for each different volunteer type who might be interested in the position. What is their educational level? Have they traveled or learned another language? After you have developed a detailed profile for one type, complete the recruitment plan by answering the questions Why, Where, and How on the following pages. Then go through the same process with each group of likely facilitators.

WHY would they want to do the job?

For every type, decide what would motivate such a person to volunteer as a Talk Time facilitator in your program.

Social

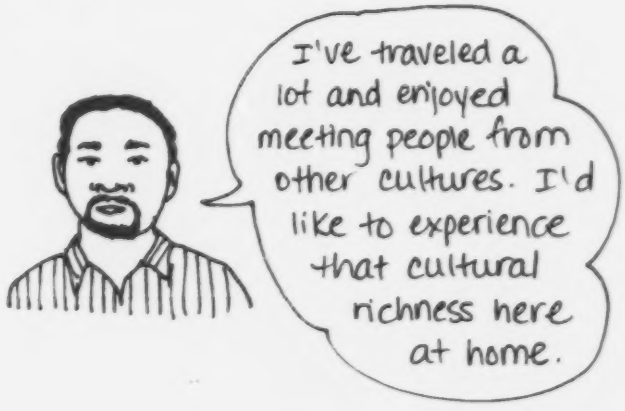
- meet other interesting people who share similar values
- get out of the house and into the community

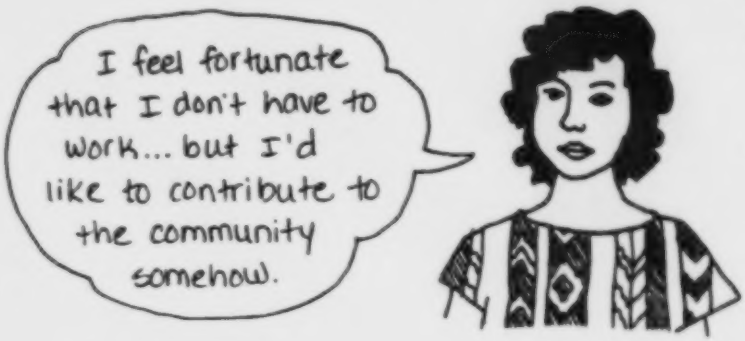
Professional Development

- acquire experience to document on a resume or recommendation letter
- gain valuable work experience
- acquire training

Cultural Expansion

- learn about different cultures
- foster a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity
- welcome newcomers to the community


I've traveled a lot and enjoyed meeting people from other cultures. I'd like to experience that cultural richness here at home.

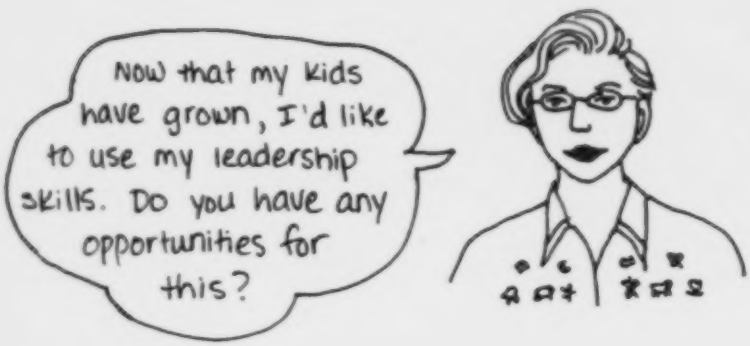


Make a Difference

- add a meaningful activity to life
- have an effect on people's lives

Individual Recognition

- have special talents recognized
- express interest, concern, and appreciation for individual



Responsibility

- accomplish a specific goal for the program
- take on a leadership role

WHERE can I find them in my community?

Envision where you might find these people. Imagine following them around town for a week. Where do they go? What errands do they do? What do they do for relaxation? Where do they go for entertainment? By carefully considering the lives of potential facilitators, you will easily find and attract more people with the qualities you desire.

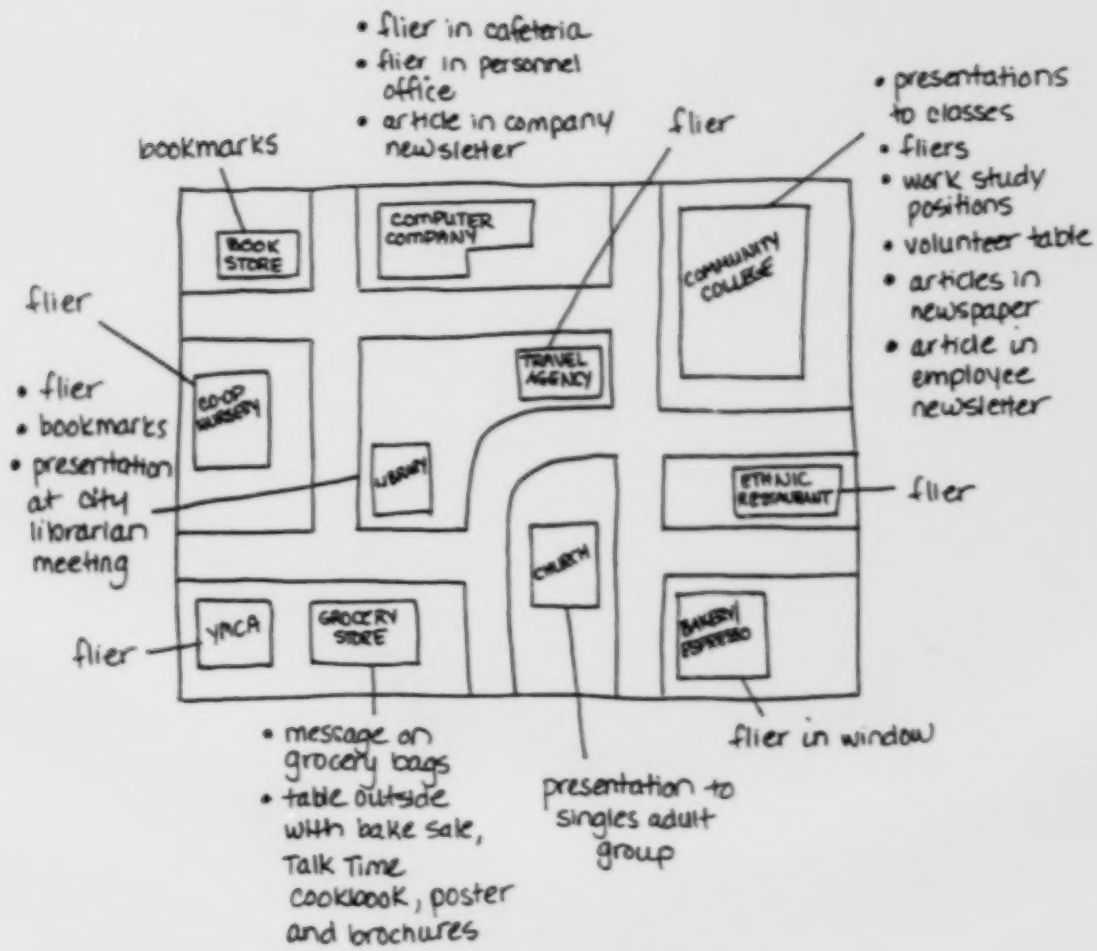
Be specific with your list of places. Brainstorm precisely which bookstore, ethnic restaurant, or day care center your prospective volunteers may frequent in your community. What organizations do they belong to? Where do they work?

Locations / Groups

Make presentations and distribute information to the following people and places in your community:

- art supply stores
- athletic clubs
- banks
- bookstores
- Chamber of Commerce
- children's used clothing stores
- churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples
- community centers
- doctors' offices
- employers
- espresso places
- ethnic and other selected restaurants
- ethnic organizations
- ethnic food markets
- food co-ops
- former and current volunteers
- health food stores
- libraries
- other literacy programs
- Peace Corps recruitment office

- personnel offices at schools, colleges, and city government
- record stores
- social service agencies
- travel agencies
- United Way volunteer center
- universities / community colleges:
  - volunteer booth
  - ethnic studies, education, sociology, and anthropology departments
  - financial aide office
  - ethnic student associations
  - internship, community involvement, and work study programs



HOW will I inform them about the job?

■ Volunteer Recruitment Message

Write your recruitment message with both the mission statement and the possible motivations of your volunteers in mind. By presenting a clear picture of your program's mission and values, you have begun the volunteer screening process. The message should attract people with the qualities you seek who are able to do the job and want to assist you in accomplishing the mission of your program for the participants. At the same time, the message should dissuade others who would be uncomfortable or disagree with your mission.

Screening begins with your first recruitment messages.

Mission Statement: present the program's philosophy

- The Talk Time program provides ___ for ___ so they can ___.

Desired Qualities: list some of the desired qualities

- The Talk Time program is looking for people who are ___ and can ___.

Responsibilities / Benefits: detail the responsibilities and some of the benefits which match the motivation of your audience

- As a Talk Time facilitator ___ hours a week, you will give ___ the opportunity to ___ and get ___ in return.

Recruitment Message: state that you are seeking a few qualified volunteers

- We are now selectively recruiting for Talk Time facilitators.

■ Volunteer Recruitment Methods

Different places may suggest different ways to send the recruitment messages. The following list of methods for sending messages includes strategies collected from successful Talk Time programs:

Make Presentations, Announcements, Personal Appeals:

Who makes the presentations?
- volunteer facilitators
- participants
- Talk Time program manager and session coordinator

Where do you make them? See WHERE page 27
- to groups or individuals
- at meetings and classes
- on the radio and TV
- in booths at public events

With what visual aides?
- create a video
- develop a slide show
- design a display

Distribute Written Information

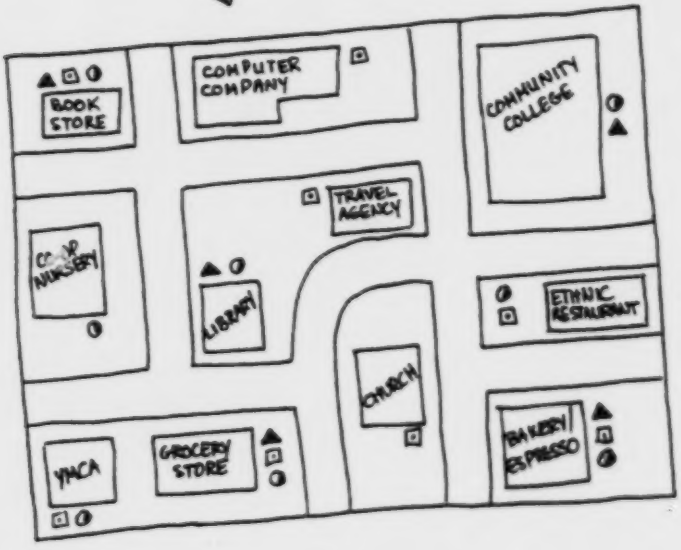
- brochures
- fliers
- letters
- posters

Write Articles For

- local and neighborhood newspapers
- college and university newspapers
- college and university catalogs
- religious organization and school bulletins
- library, religious organizations, and employer newsletters
- business journals

software designer, likes to exercise, bilingual, planning a trip to Asia

freelance writer at home, teaches an aerobics class, loves ethnic food, wants to give back to the community

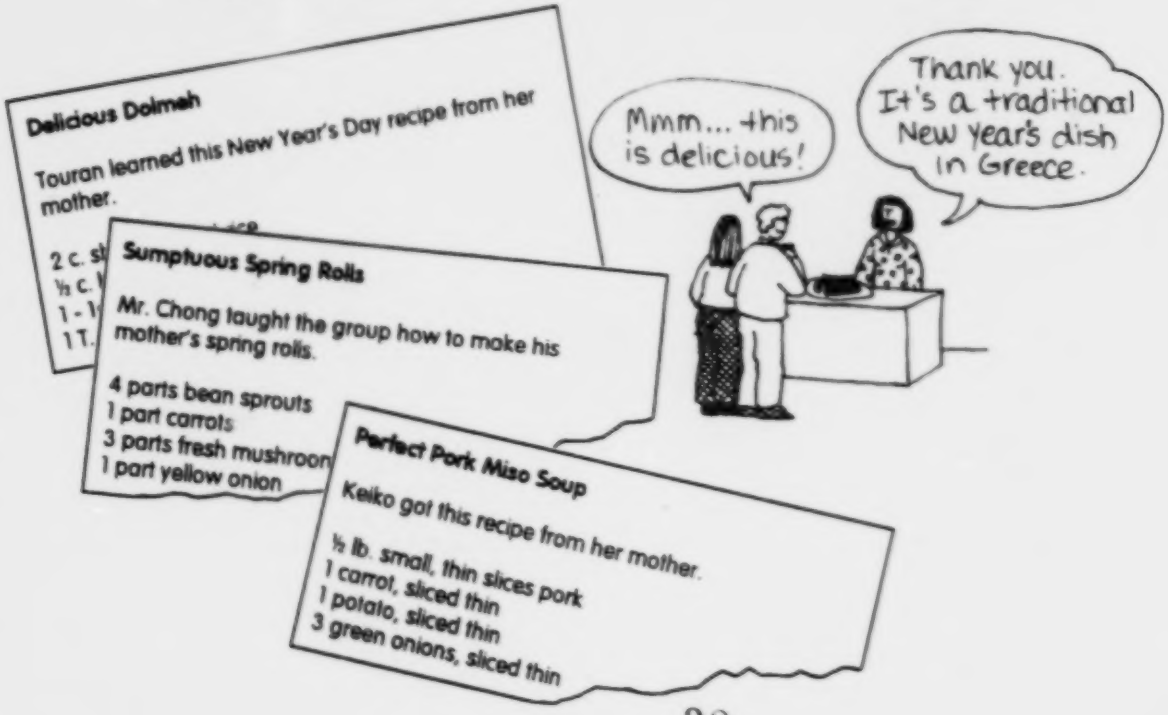


college student, interested in social service, works at the bakery, an avid reader

PROFILE: Perogies, Peppers, and Paella

With one idea - the development of an international cookbook - the Bellevue Community College Talk Time Program found a way to attract prospective volunteer facilitators into their program, enjoy the delights of international food, raise money, and get all the Talk Time members eagerly chatting about a topic of great interest. For one quarter, they planned Talk Time session activities around collecting recipes and producing an international cookbook. Participants and facilitators were encouraged to share memories about their favorite foods and bring the recipes to Talk Time. Members of each small conversation group brought cooking implements and ingredients from home to demonstrate for each other how to prepare the food. Then they documented the recipe amounts and cooking directions. The participants also shared addresses of local ethnic grocery stores carrying difficult-to-find ingredients.

After celebrating the completion of the Global Cookbook with a Talk Time pot luck to sample the recipes, the program decided to share their treasure with staff and students at the community college. They organized a bake sale where people could purchase portions of the recipes, buy the cookbook, and learn more about the Talk Time program from the enthusiastic and proud volunteers and participants.


Delicious Dolmah
Touran learned this New Year's Day recipe from her mother.
Sumptuous Spring Rolls
Mr. Chong taught the group how to make his mother's spring rolls.
4 parts bean sprouts
1 part carrots
3 parts fresh mushroom
1 part yellow onion
Perfect Pork Miso Soup
Keiko got this recipe from her mother.
½ lb. small, thin slices pork
1 carrot, sliced thin
1 potato, sliced thin
3 green onions, sliced thin
Mmm... this is delicious!
Thank you. It's a traditional New year's dish in Greece.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCESS

The notion of screening volunteers is relatively new. When creating a new program, it may be impossible to imagine that you would turn away eager volunteers. You may be so thrilled with any response to your recruitment message that you say, "Oh, thank you for calling. When can you start?" This well-intentioned reaction, however, is not fair to the program, the potential volunteer, or the participants, as it often ends unsatisfactorily. Focus on your mission statement. Who is your Talk Time program intended to serve and why? What are the desired qualities of facilitators when they arrive at your program? The well-being of your participants should always be your guide.

Programs have discovered that not everyone can be a good conversation facilitator. It may seem that those who don't want to tutor can always talk. But the purpose of Talk Time is to get limited English speakers talking. Good facilitators listen and draw out conversation, they don't talk a lot. Talk Time is also not teaching in the traditional sense, so some people with teaching experience or expectations have a very difficult time facilitating. Because they may want to instruct, they end up talking most of the time, assuming a role of authority, and correcting participants' pronunciation. While in moderation this may be useful for tutoring, it is not desired in Talk Time. You can train people to acquire new skills, but not to hold new basic attitudes like patience, for example. See IDEAL QUALITIES page 23 and TRAINING page 45

So you need to implement a screening process to locate a few great volunteers who have the qualities you seek. The screening process should attract people with the qualities you seek and dissuade those without them. Screening benefits the program because it maintains the reputation of the program, protects participants from damaging attitudes of unacceptable and unaccepting facilitators, and promotes the morale of everyone in the program.

I'm a seamstress. I like it.
What do you like about your job, Marta?
my supervisor she's very nice. we can listen to music.
Last weekend I went fishing. You people are good at that, aren't you? Anyway... back to my story. I was putting on the bait... do you understand bait? You know, like those little orange marshmallows. You put it on the hook. You know, tackle.
?

First Response to a Recruitment Message

You have distributed fliers to select locations around town, presented information at meetings, placed an ad in the local paper, and written an article for an employee newsletter. Finally, the phone begins to ring, and intrigued people want to know more.

■ Present a brief overview of the program:

First, explain the few critical factors in your job description that would immediately determine the ability or interest of a prospective volunteer to participate in your Talk Time:

- mission statement
- description of the participants
- location and times of the Talk Time session
- minimum requirements and expectations

Someone may quickly decide that she can not join - or really does not want to join - your program. That's fine. It is better for you both to know it right away.

■ Ask a few open-ended questions:

How did you find out about our program?

Why did you call today?

Why do you want to be involved with our program?

■ Determine if caller is appropriate:

If the answers to your questions sound reasonable, then send the Talk Time program information packet. If you feel the caller is not appropriate for Talk Time, simply make a referral to another program.

- Promptly send a packet of program materials including:

  - cover letter
  - volunteer facilitator application form
  - job description
  - program information sheet - Programs have discovered that most potential volunteers ask the following types of questions when interested in Talk Time. Provide detailed answers for these questions and others in your Talk Time program's information packet so they get a clear picture to mull over.

    Why is it called Talk Time?

    How is Talk Time different from an ESL class?

    Do I need teaching experience to facilitate a group?

    Who will be in my group?

    How is Talk Time structured?

    What kinds of activities take place in Talk Time groups?

    How will I know I'm doing a good job?

- Ask prospective volunteers to return the completed form:

If they are still interested in Talk Time after reading the material, have them return the completed volunteer application form.

- Call prospective volunteers:

Within two weeks of receiving the completed form, call the prospective volunteers to arrange for an individual interview.

VOLUNTEER TALK TIME FACILITATOR
APPLICATION FORM

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

Today's date

Name

Home address / mailing address

Phone number: day and evening

Best time to be reached

Emergency contact

Personal reference / phone number

Availability: times / days per week; minimum time commitment (months)

Educational background

Employment status

Current employer / position

Occupation / former occupation

Languages spoken

Transportation

Travel experience

Anything else you would like us to know?

How did you learn about our program?

Describe your previous volunteer experiences.

What did you enjoy most in your previous volunteer assignments?

What did you enjoy least in your previous volunteer assignments?

Why do you want to volunteer for our program now?

What special skills, interests, and resources do you have that might be relevant to the Talk Time?

What other programs or organizations are you associated with?

In what ways do you hope your volunteer effort will make a difference to others?

How do you plan to measure your effectiveness as a Talk Time volunteer facilitator?

Interview Process

As a **program coordinator**, you need to have certain information about a prospective volunteer in order to make a decision whether she could be an appropriate Talk Time facilitator. Not every potential volunteer will be a good match for your program.

The **prospective volunteer** needs an opportunity to clarify the requirements of the job description before making a commitment to join your organization; not every potential volunteer really wants to facilitate Talk Time once she knows the responsibilities involved.

The interview allows both you and the prospective volunteer to clarify any questions either of you may have before reaching a mutual understanding about the next step. Interview questions should be carefully crafted to get volunteers to express their opinions, feelings, experiences, and perceptions. From this information, you can then decide whether the volunteer has or shares the qualities you want. The interview should draw out responses which may represent red flags. If you don't notice them during the interview, they will surely show up during Talk Time. Take the advice of wise, experienced Talk Time program managers: while uncomfortable at first, it is much easier to screen out a questionable volunteer before placement than to fire an inappropriate, disruptive, or incorrigible volunteer later.

First, review your desired qualities, select the most important ones, and develop an interview process to screen for them. Add to your list of positive qualities a few undesirable ones. For each undesirable quality, describe some red flags. From your experience or wild imagination, detail what someone would do or say to demonstrate a negative quality for Talk Time facilitating. For example, "People

really shouldn't come to the United States without knowing English. I want to help them learn." "I just think foreigners should become Americans as soon as possible. They've got to follow our rules." "I'm a teacher, so I feel it's important for immigrants to learn to speak correct English." Now add some questions which might draw out these red flags.

Interviews are sometimes viewed as a waste of time. "If I'm just going to spend an hour telling someone about the program, I might as well tell a whole group of people all at once." Or the interview is viewed only as a sales pitch. "I just need time to tell the volunteers all about the program and convince them to join as soon as possible." However, once you are convinced that not all prospective volunteers are suitable to become Talk Time facilitators, the interview becomes an opportunity to determine whether they will enhance your program. And since you have already sent them detailed information about the program, you will not need to take precious interview time to explain the details.

Each prospective volunteer will bring her own combination of personal motivations. The individual interview will give you the opportunity to explore these motives with the volunteer. If the true motivations are desirable and healthy, then you can begin to present the specific ways your program will be able to meet her needs or fulfill her reasons for volunteering. For example, someone new in town may express a desire to meet other interesting people - a reasonable motivation. If, however, during the interview someone talks incessantly about herself, her frustrations, and personal problems, she may want to attend the Talk Time more out of her own neediness than her concern and interest for others.
See VOLUNTEER SUPPORT / RECOGNITION page 54

From the interview and information form, you can also glean details about contacts in the community which may lead to ideas for speakers, field trips, and sources of material resources to enhance your Talk Time program. You may discover talents among your volunteers in photography, gardening, music, or dance. You may find links to a hardware store, fire department, the zoo, or a bakery. Or you may locate sources for paper supplies, printing, childcare, or a party room. The more you know about your volunteers' contacts and interests, the more you can involve them in the success of your program. Also, the better you know your volunteers the more you can appeal to their interests and satisfy their needs, and that keeps them coming back.

■ Get Ready

- Have the Talk Time volunteer facilitator application form, job description, and interview form handy.
- Have accessible any visual aids to illustrate your program such as pictures of your sessions or newspaper articles about your program.
- Create a comfortable, private space for the interview.

■ Tune In

- Get acquainted. Share some information about yourself to let the volunteer know with whom he will be working.
- Give a basic overview of your agency and Talk Time program.
- State the purpose of the interview: to answer any questions about the program's expectations and gather information from the prospective volunteer about his interests, beliefs, and experiences in order to make a mutual decision about his acceptance into your program.
- Review the Talk Time job description.
- Review the completed Talk Time volunteer facilitator application form.

■ Find Out

Here is a list of possible questions which should encourage the volunteer to reveal his beliefs, feelings, and attitudes. From this information about the volunteer's qualities, you can reach the decision to accept the volunteer into your program.

TALK TIME INTERVIEW FORM

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

NAME _____ DATE _____

Interview Questions

Tell me about your experience in a cross cultural environment.

How are you different as a result of the experience?

Describe your experiences learning another language.

Describe a situation where you didn't know the language being spoken.

Why do you think newcomers need to learn to speak English?

Why do you think newcomers will benefit from Talk Time?

Why do you think people come to the United States to live?

Why are you interested in becoming a Talk Time facilitator?

List the benefits you hope to gain from this experience.

What attracted you to our organization?

What did you hear about our program?

Our program's philosophy is ___. How do you feel about this statement?

How do you feel about the request for a one year commitment?

What special skills, qualities, or resources can you offer this program?

What support do you hope to receive from the staff and program?

What type of supervision would you feel comfortable receiving?

Is there any other information you would like to share with us?

Do you have any questions for us?

Comments:

■ Come to Closure

Tell the prospective volunteer that you are making a decision after interviewing more people. You will contact everyone in two weeks to inform him of his acceptance and give details about the training and sessions. Tell him to go home and think about the position then call you by a certain date to register for the Talk Time orientation and training. Give the volunteer one last opportunity to consider carefully whether he wants to commit to your program even if you are convinced during the interview that the volunteer possesses the desired qualities.

■ Make a Decision

If the **volunteer doubts** whether he wants to join your Talk Time program, he may want to observe a Talk Time session before making a final decision. After the visit, he can discuss his experience with you and then decide.

Hmm....this isn't exactly what I expected.
He doesn't seem very certain.
maybe you'd like to just come and observe next Wednesday.

However, if **you have doubts** about the suitability of a volunteer after the initial interview, you could have the volunteer return for another interview with a different staff person or group interview. Then assess your combined impressions with the collected information. Follow the overwhelming advice of experienced coordinators: **trust your strong instincts about the unsuitability of a volunteer.** Since you have already clearly stated that you are looking for a few qualified Talk Time facilitators, he should know there is a possibility he may not be selected to become a volunteer for your program. Again, you may fear sending the message that if you do not need every volunteer who comes to your door, your program really does not need anyone. Keep in mind that your program only needs capable volunteers to carry out your mission for the participants. Your program's reputation will soar if the participants' benefit remains the focus of all your decisions. Your Talk Time program does not exist just to satisfy the needs of every prospective volunteer.

If you decide not to accept a person as a volunteer, you can try these three approaches:

- You could send a letter with this message. "After interviewing many prospective volunteers, we have chosen other people whose qualifications more closely match our program's. We wish you well in your search for a volunteer placement."

- If she calls and wants to know why she was not selected, try to be as specific as possible with the information collected during the screening process. You could refer her to another volunteer opportunity in the community. "It seems to us that your experience and beliefs would more closely match another program. You said _____ during the interview. In this program, we believe _____. Here is the phone number of the volunteer bureau."

- The most popular and least direct method for dealing with an inappropriate volunteer is to simply say, "We don't have a need for your services right now, but I will call you if we have a need in the future."

Talk Time Program Orientation

After selecting your volunteer facilitators, invite them to a group Talk Time program orientation before the training workshop. The training provides facilitators with the Talk Time philosophy and skills to plan sessions and foster communication. The program orientation, however, gives the volunteers an opportunity to learn about your program, agency, and community as they will want to know how they will fit into the larger organization.

Individually recruited and interviewed volunteers benefit from a group orientation meeting. You can help them get acquainted and start building a sense of community at the same time you familiarize them with your program. Strangers will leave the meeting as friends with a sense of their common mission.

■ Program Orientation Activities

- Meet in a comfortable setting conducive to easy communication
- Conduct a group warm-up activity
- Take time for individual introductions so volunteers get to know each other
- Provide information about the big picture
  - history of refugees and immigrants in the United States
  - limited English speakers in the state
  - ethnic communities in the local area
  - English as a Second Language classes in the area
  - description of how your Talk Time program fits into this picture
- Provide information about your organization
  - history and funding sources of your program
  - the purpose and goals of your organization
  - how you relate to other organizations in the area
  - names and functions of your key staff members
  - hours, holiday schedule, and rules of your agency
  - physical layout of the building
  - information about community meetings and resources of interest

- Present background information about the participants and their cultures - perhaps presented by refugee and immigrant staff or participants
- Present volunteer expectations, mission statement, policies, and philosophy
- Describe trainings and other volunteer events
- Offer refreshments and ethnic foods for a break time
- Discuss the benefits for the volunteers of participating in Talk Time
- Show a program-produced video or slide show of Talk Time
- Explain program's recommended process for making referrals to social service providers to meet the participants' needs
- Have participants and facilitators speak about their Talk Time experience

Talk Time Volunteer Facilitator Training

The Talk Time volunteer facilitator training provided by the Tacoma Community House Training Project has evolved over the years with input from facilitators, program managers, session coordinators, and the Training Project trainers. Together we have concluded that some skills can be taught, such as using realia to increase communication, while other characteristics cannot be taught. Volunteer facilitators need to come to the program with patience and cultural sensitivity. The interview process gives you the opportunity to screen for these desired but difficult to teach qualities.

In designing the agenda, we first decided what good Talk Time facilitators are able to do - use a variety of methods to encourage their partners or groups to speak English and create Talk Time session plans with all the recommended elements. Then we designed the workshop agenda to strengthen these skills. During the workshop, all the approaches and activities that ensure a successful Talk Time are modeled, demonstrated, discussed, and practiced in order to give the volunteers time to hone their facilitating skills. Finally, the volunteers have a chance to design activities for a session plan following the Talk Time Session Plan Guidelines.

Tacoma Community House Training Project Talk Time Training Agenda

The following are activities and goals for the four hour workshop.

Warm-up
encourage participation throughout the training; put people at ease; model different kinds of Talk Time warm-ups

Video
introduce key Talk Time concepts by having people see an actual Talk Time session; discuss format, group, size, role of facilitator, difference between tutoring and Talk Time, importance of visuals, and topic selection

Language Immersion
have participants experience what a Talk Time session might feel like by exposing them to another language

Visuals
emphasize the importance of visuals and objects; discuss different kinds of visuals; brainstorm visuals for different topics; develop an awareness of questions commonly asked and the language required to answer them

Discussion
present and practice an approach for encouraging natural conversation

Role Plays
present and practice ideas for different kinds of Role Plays - structured, unstructured, for large or small groups

Curriculum Development
present ideas for topic selection; encourage facilitators to include students in the curriculum development

Session Planning
present a model for session planning and have facilitators plan a session

Talk Time Scenario
address common issues of facilitator concern - cross-cultural differences, quiet students, non-stop talkers

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Now you have your ideal location and a small group of committed and enthusiastic volunteers. Your next step is to recruit your participants! While the process of recruitment might seem to be the same as the one that you used to find volunteers, the methods and means are appropriate for attracting a different audience - a group of eager potential participants. Who are you looking for? Where do you look? How can you find the participants that might be looking for you and not even know it? The needs assessment process will tell you who in your program or community most needs your Talk Time service. Some ESL programs know there are plenty of students already in their classes who would be eager to enter Talk Time once they hear about it. Other programs will need to get the message out into the community to inform potential participants about their new Talk Time service. Some programs may choose to focus on one group to provide a specialized Talk Time. Some programs may decide to limit their service to low income people and not include visiting international college students, for example. Keep in mind that the design of your program - when, where, and the content - will be affected by your decision of whom your program hopes to serve. Just as you targeted your volunteer recruitment efforts, the recruitment process for participants will also be driven by the decision of whom you hope to find.

WHAT happens at Talk Time?

Create a clear statement of the Talk Time program. At first, the Talk Time format may seem unfamiliar to potential participants and be confused with an English class. Recruitment should emphasize both the fun and advantages of informal English speaking practice. Advertise the relaxed atmosphere, the chance to make contacts with the local community, and the opportunity to exchange cultural information and discuss issues of interest and concern. Getting the initial group together may be difficult until the word-of-mouth effect gets started. Later you can encourage active Talk Time participants to bring their friends.

WHO are my participants?

The list below describes some groups of limited English speakers who could benefit from Talk Time:

- employees in the workforce
- foodbank and emergency housing referrals
- homebound mothers
- isolated Latina women
- JOBS clients
- Korean wives of military personnel
- low income people
- seasonal agricultural workers
- new mothers
- newcomers to the community
- newly employed workers
- newly arrived refugees during their first few months in the United States
- particular ethnic communities: Lao, Cambodian, Ethiopian, Latino, etc.
- people without access to ESL instruction
- refugees who have been in the United States many years
- residents of isolated areas of a community
- single parents on public assistance
- social service agency referrals
- students in college classes who need additional conversation practice
- students on waiting lists for community ESL classes
- visiting international college students

WHY would they want to come?

Consider the motivations of the participants who will come to your Talk Time. What needs, desires, or concerns in their lives will the Talk Time experience meet? You can collect a specific list by talking to enough people in the participants' communities during the needs assessment phase.

WHERE can I find them in my community?

Gather a group of potential Talk Time participants and members of the participants' communities to help you construct a detailed list of places where people live, work, play, and go about their daily lives. The list can also include locations of service providers to their communities:

- alternative high schools
- apartment buildings or neighborhoods
- bus system
- community fairs
- community colleges and universities
- county extension services
- crisis clinics
- day care centers
- doctors' offices
- employment security offices
- ethnic community associations
- ethnic community health care providers
- ethnic community social service organizations
- ethnic restaurants and markets
- family health clinics
- food banks
- grocery stores
- Head Start
- health fairs
- Hispanic Affairs Commission
- homeless shelters
- hospitals
- Immigration and Naturalization Service

- international and ethnic student associations
- isolated parts of the city lacking ESL services
- Laundromats
- libraries
- literacy hotline
- local employers
- MAA's - Mutual Assistance Associations of refugee communities
- malls
- members of ethnic churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples
- multi-service centers
- public health offices
- public housing authority
- public school district special services office
- public school social workers
- refugee forum
- sites of ESL classes at community colleges, universities, and agencies
- tenants' unions
- vocational training programs
- volunteer literacy tutoring programs
- Volags - Voluntary Agencies sponsoring refugees
- WIC - Women, Infants, and Children Program

HOW can I let people know about Talk Time?

The most effective methods for getting your message about Talk Time into the community involve translated statements and interpreters. Here are some ways to distribute your recruitment message:

Make Presentations

Who makes the presentations?

- ethnic community members
- Talk Time program manager and session coordinator
- bilingual Talk Time participants and facilitators

Where do we make them?

- to groups or individuals
- at meetings or classes
- on the radio and TV
- in booths at public events

With what visual aides?

- create a display
- create a video
- develop a scrap book
- develop a slide show

Send or Distribute Materials - translated if possible

- book marks
- brochures
- displays
- fliers
- letters
- posters

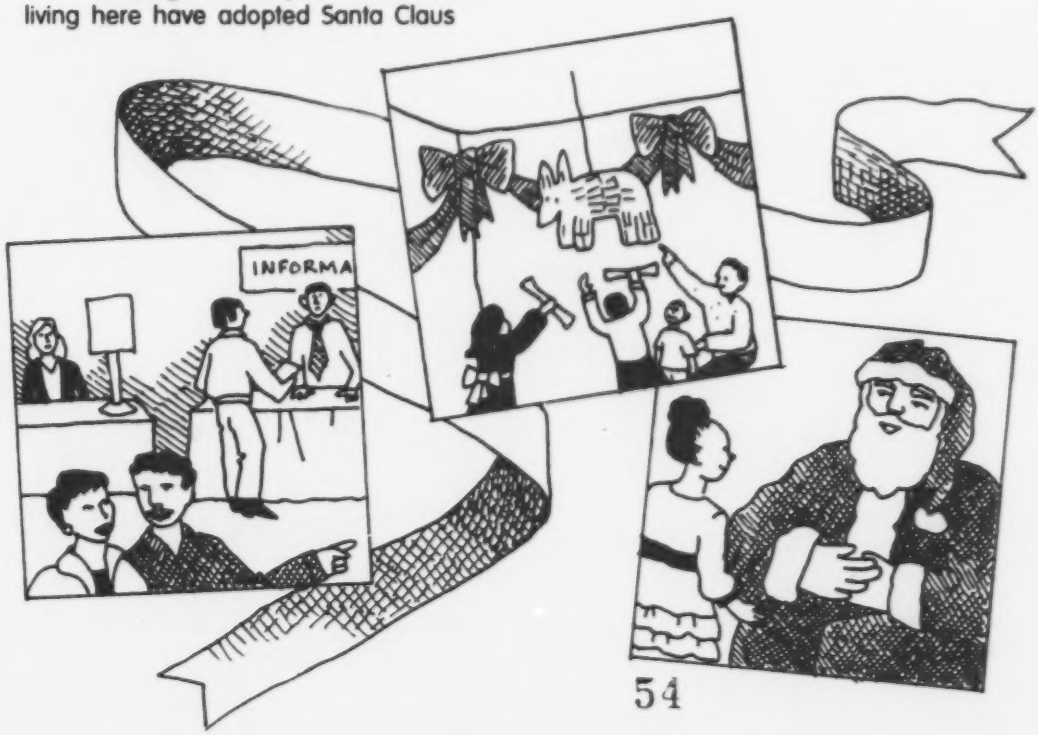
Write Articles for

- religious organization and school bulletins
- college and university newspapers
- local, ethnic, and neighborhood newspapers

Profile: Fiesta Navideña

Colorful piñatas, musical chairs, and a Spanish-speaking Santa - Jorge Solano aboard a fire truck - greeted the newest residents of Shelton during its first Latino Christmas party. In an effort to attract Latino participants in this small rural community for a new ESL service called Talk Time, the Mason County Literacy ESL coordinator worked with an advisory committee to organize a fiesta. This ESL advisory committee, a unique aspect of this particular program, is comprised of Latino community members who are active in the design and planning of this program. Fiesta Navideña was organized to present information about Talk Time in Spanish, introduce some community services to Latino families, and celebrate Christmas.

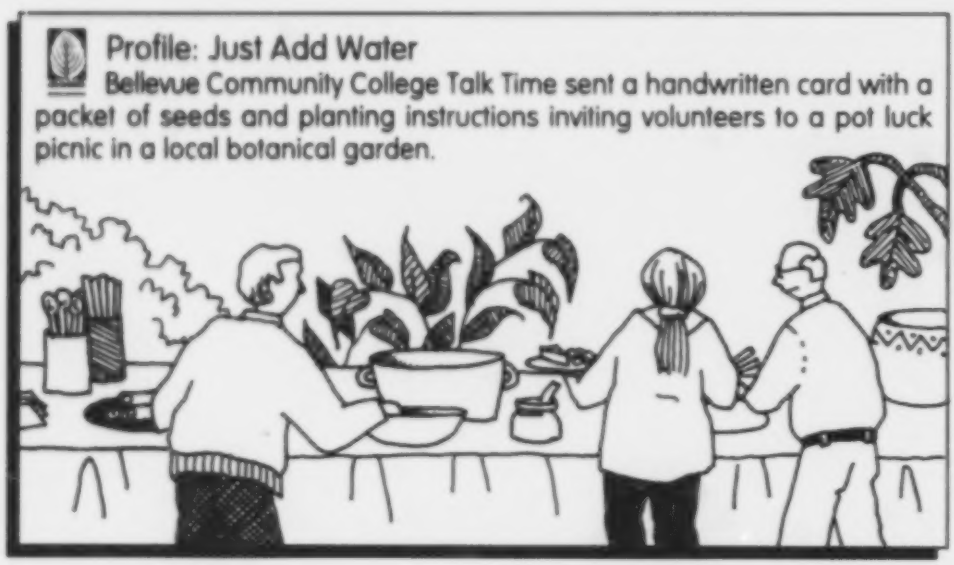
Noting that many Latino families living here have adopted Santa Claus as their own because it is "the American way," event organizers made piñatas, baked cookies, and helped the children hang ornaments on the Christmas tree. They also set up booths sponsored by local agencies for the parents in an effort to mix the fun of the event with some information needed for their daily lives. One booth featured a bilingual Girl Scout troop looking for members while others featured a wide variety of services available in the area - court system translation, English classes, and local fire departments covering emergency care and situations. Event planners hoped that 50 adults and children would attend; 175 people showed up and 50 eager recruits signed up for the first Talk Time.



VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

Congratulations! You have successfully screened and interviewed your volunteers, recruited your participants, and located the perfect place for your Talk Time sessions. You might think, "Okay. I'm ready for my first session." Specifics for planning a Talk Time session are covered later in the book, but first you have two more areas that you need to carefully consider to ensure a successful Talk Time experience. Supporting your volunteers and evaluating and assessing your program are the final steps you need to complete when setting up your program.

Plan a variety of ways to satisfy the myriad motivations of volunteers for joining your Talk Time program. When volunteers receive the rewards they hoped for, they tend to stay involved much longer and tell inspiring stories about the experience to their friends. Most motivations tend to fall into one or more of these six categories: social experience, cultural expansion, individual recognition, making a difference, responsibility, or professional development. Following are ideas for supporting and rewarding volunteers with any of those six motivations. Your program will surely add other ideas. See WHY page 25



Profile: Just Add Water

Bellevue Community College Talk Time sent a handwritten card with a packet of seeds and planting instructions inviting volunteers to a pot luck picnic in a local botanical garden.

Social Experience:

meet other people with similar interests; establish supportive relationships with limited English speakers

- organize a group program orientation with a social opportunity to meet other facilitators
- arrange gatherings of volunteers, participants, staff and their families: picnics, pot luck meals, brown bag lunches, and holiday parties
- schedule a long social break with coffee and food in each Talk Time session as a time to chat with you, other volunteers, staff, and other participants
- arrange for a debriefing period at the end of each Talk Time session to meet with all the facilitators

Cultural Expansion:

learn more about the world and the similarities among many different cultures

- publicize local ethnic community events
- arrange for presentations by ethnic leaders, service providers, or performers at volunteer share meetings and Talk Time sessions
- display multi-cultural materials See CULTURE BOXES Page 78
- collect and make available cultural information
- plan all Talk Time session topics to include activities which promote cultural exchange
- regularly arrange Talk Time pot luck parties so everyone can enjoy and appreciate the cultural diversity of food
- supply information from local ethnic communities and organizations
- encourage participants to make presentations of cultural information during Talk Time

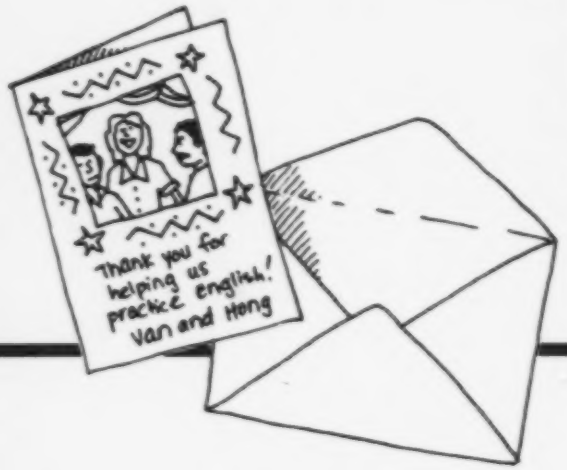
Individual Recognition:

acknowledge special personal needs of each individual volunteer

- take pictures of all the volunteer facilitators and participants; send holiday cards to all with the picture inside
- keep volunteers informed of current developments in your agency and program
- avoid burn-out by giving vacations or a change of pace
- utilize unique talents and interests
- provide a social service list of community resources
- carefully match volunteers with Talk Time participants
- send cards: birthday, holiday, thank you
- organize an appreciation program:
  - invite the agency director, college president, or board members;
  - have participants provide entertainment and offer food;
  - present certificates or other items of appreciation
- submit an article highlighting a special volunteer for the newspaper, radio, or TV
- nominate a volunteer for an award
- procure benefits from the community: free tickets or discounts on materials
- arrange a convenient, comfortable physical setting: ample supplies, parking, childcare, refreshments, and heat
- send a special thank you for extraordinary service: personal note or flower
- encourage volunteers to make presentations to the public about their personal Talk Time experience
- have participants give facilitators invitations to a recognition event
- provide transportation to program functions
- send a thank you letter at the end of volunteer service
- arrange an exit interview to say thank you: encourage the volunteer to honestly express her evaluation of her experience
- publish a newsletter
  - announce upcoming events and reports of past events
  - include stories and pictures by Talk Time participants
  - collect anecdotes from participants of their memorable conversations

Profile:
Snapshots

South Seattle Community College sent photographs of each facilitator with a few participants in a card containing a personal quote from participants in their session.



Make a Difference:

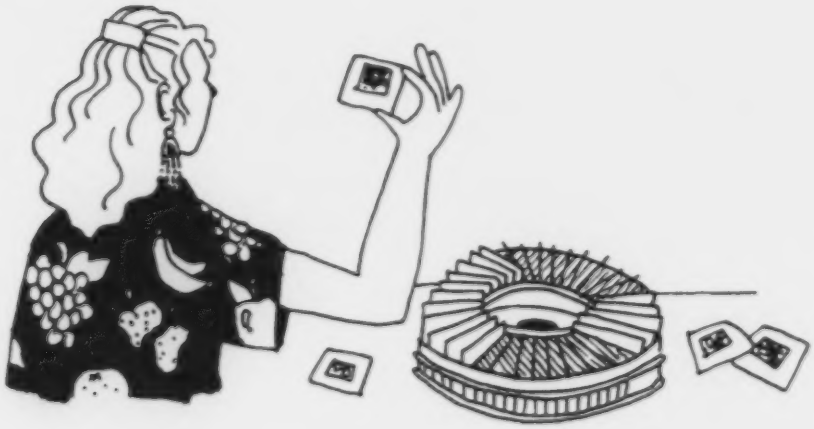
improve conditions in society; help people acquire skills for self sufficiency

- collect and publish participant success stories and assessment results to document the positive changes in participants' lives as a result of being in Talk Time
- write articles about Talk Time for the program newsletter or local paper
- involve the volunteers in celebrating National Volunteer Week or ESL / Bilingual Week
- have active Talk Time facilitators and participants make public presentations about their experience
- create a slide show, scrap book, or video documenting your program for use in volunteer and participant recruitment, orientations, and public relations presentations

Responsibility:

accomplish other tasks using special skills and talents

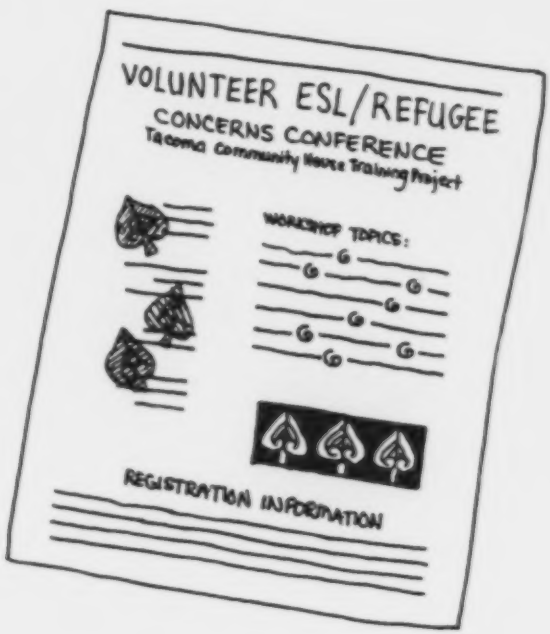
- ask for input from volunteers affected by a decision before making the decision
- plan a Talk Time retreat to involve all facilitators in the evaluation and planning of the program
- invite volunteers to participate in planning, evaluating, and problem solving
- ask an experienced volunteer facilitator to become a mentor for new volunteers, assist with new volunteer orientation and training, and observe and support them during the sessions
- delegate some program management responsibilities to capable volunteers
  - plan or manage some element of Talk Time sessions
  - develop a resource library
  - produce a newsletter
  - plan a potluck party
  - implement participant assessment process
  - redesign brochures
  - create a slide show
  - assist with interview process
  - assist with orientation
- ask for recruitment ideas
- provide specific training for a volunteer taking on a new role
- invite volunteers to program staff meetings



Professional Development:

gain work experience, training, and increased skills

- write resumes and recommendation letters: document training, experience hours, skills, and duties
- announce additional ESL workshops offered in the community
- develop a resource library and bibliography of ESL and cultural materials
- write a letter of appreciation to employer
- provide an evaluation of job performance; include positive feedback as well as a discussion of areas for improvement
- attend an ESL conference and meet as a group afterward to share ideas
- organize in-service workshops to present new ideas, share successful activities, and develop strategies to overcome problems
- provide credit for training and facilitating a Talk Time session
- provide scholarships to volunteer / ESL conferences and workshops
- send a newsletter sharing Talk Time tips
- announce job notices in related areas



ASSESSMENT / EVALUATION

As Talk Time programs have developed over the years, the need and desire to more accurately assess them has also grown. Session coordinators need a process for assessing the English speaking level of new Talk Time participants so they can guide them to their appropriate group. Funders want proof of quality and everyone would like to document the progress gained by participating in Talk Time. Finally, program coordinators want input from volunteers and participants about the Talk Time structure, topics, and activities in order to improve the design of their Talk Time sessions. This section will include ideas for all three types of assessment:

- participant assessment: determine the speaking level
- participant evaluation: capture the change in participants' lives
- program evaluation: gather information for improvement

Participant Intake / Assessment

Just as you want to get to know your volunteer facilitators before Talk Time begins, you will want to find out about your individual participants as well. Some programs ask participants to meet individually with the Talk Time coordinator before the Talk Time quarter or their first session begins. During this time, the coordinator fills out an intake form giving useful information. The form could also contain one or more items to evaluate the participant's confidence to speak English. Collecting this information during the intake process seems a very convenient time to get the pre-Talk Time status. The **Participant Information Form** is the place to collect **general participant information**, **participant assessment results**, and **pre-Talk Time participant evaluation data**. This information can be gathered from the participant on a written translated form, asked in the participants' first language, collected from a friend or relative, or asked in English. See PARTICIPANT EVALUATION page 65 and BEGINNING GROUP page 75

PARTICIPANT INTAKE FORM

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

Participant Information

What is your name?

What is your address?

What is your phone number?

What is the phone number of a friend?

What languages do you speak?

Where are you from?

When did you come to the United States?

Do you have a job now?

Where do you work?

When do you work?

Did you study English before? Where? How much?

How many years did you go to school in your native country?

How did you come to Talk Time today? ____ bus ____ car ____ other

What are your plans for the future?

English speaking level: beginning intermediate advanced

Pre-Talk Time Participant Evaluation

During the week I use English: never a little a lot all the time

■ Assessment of Participants' Initial English Speaking Level

Assess the participants' initial English speaking level with an easy process to quickly place them in a beginning or more advanced conversation group. Here are three simple processes:

Process 1 — Ask the questions in English on the Participant Information Form.

Assessment — Make a quick determination of the speaking level by their ability to understand the questions and the length and detail of their responses.

Process 2 — Place six interesting pictures from National Geographic Magazine on the table. Ask the participant to pick one. Then say, *"Tell me about the picture."*

Assessment — Make a quick determination of the speaking level by the length and detail of their responses.

Process 3

Place six interesting pictures from National Geographic magazine on the table. Ask the participant to pick one. Then ask a series of questions using the following hierarchy:

- Yes / No Questions

  Is this a woman? Is she cooking? Is he happy?

- Either / Or Questions

  Is this the son or daughter? Is her dress red or white? Is she sitting or standing?

- WH Questions

  Who is this? What is she doing? Where is the girl? What time is it? What is on the table?

- Open-ended Questions

  These require some conversational ability. They may look like WH questions, but they differ in the degree of speculative thinking required. Where the simpler WH questions remain on the level of factual reporting about the picture, the open-ended questions leave room for personal opinions.

  What are they saying? What will happen next? Why is the boy crying? Does she have more children? Why do you think so? Where is the father?

- Personal Questions

  After warming up her English on the more impersonal questions about the picture, the participant may be ready to proceed to sharing personal experience.

  Do you have a family? What do you do when your children cry? Who takes care of the children when you get sick?

Assessment

Make a quick determination of the speaking level by their ability to understand the questions and the length and detail of their responses.

This question hierarchy not only can be used to assess the participants' initial English speaking ability, but also can become a great framework for guided conversation using a picture during any Talk Time session.

The participant assessment process should give you enough information to quickly place each participant into a Talk Time group where he can comfortably communicate with others. The most important purpose of participant assessment is to guide new English speakers into a beginning group; all of the other participants beyond the beginning level may be quite comfortable speaking with each other even when their levels vary. Since the primary goal of Talk Time remains increased confidence rather than increased skill, assessment of level is not usually included in the evaluation process of participants.

Participant Evaluation: Capture the Change

Assessment of participant outcomes presents the greatest challenge to adult education programs. Finding effective methods for collecting evidence that Talk Time participants are more confident to speak more English can appear even more elusive. Start with just one simple, clear, measurable item to capture the change in your participants' lives. Then bring former Talk Time participants into the process to help you design additional methods.

As a first step in developing a process for capturing the change that occurs in the lives of participants as a result of Talk Time, examine your carefully worded mission statement. Here are two examples:

> Talk Time provides an informal, nonjudgmental environment where the refugee and immigrant communities can come together to practice their English speaking skills with trained volunteer facilitators **so they can** *become more comfortable and confident to speak English.*

> Talk Time provides a diverse group of non-native English speakers with a safe, nonthreatening environment to practice English speaking skills **so they can** *gain confidence in their ability to speak English for social and practical purposes.*

The final phrase in your mission statement presents your purpose for offering Talk Time in your community and contains the starting point for your evaluation process. See MISSION STATEMENT page 15

The evaluation process is used to collect evidence to accurately reflect the changes in the lives of the participants, both in and out of the sessions, as a result of being in Talk Time. You want to collect evidence that participants do indeed "...gain confidence in their ability to speak English." But what exactly does confidence mean? What tangible things do your participants do now that they didn't do before Talk Time? How do they demonstrate their new-found confidence? What is one small behavior the participants do that you can see or they can tell you about?

When Talk Time participants were asked, "Now you say you are more confident. What do you do?" their answers clustered into the following list of general accomplishments:

- speak English more often
- speak English to more people
- speak longer when asked the same question
- initiate speech or start conversations with people
- have more English-speaking friends
- speak to each other in English
- talk on the phone in English

These changes happen when people feel more comfortable and confident. None of these is dependent on the participant having a specific English language fluency level. Even a beginning English speaker can report using English more often after the opportunity to speak to sympathetic listeners in Talk Time. Since the purpose of Talk Time is to increase a person's confidence to use English regardless of her level, the above list of indications will capture that change.

■ Pre- and post-questionnaires

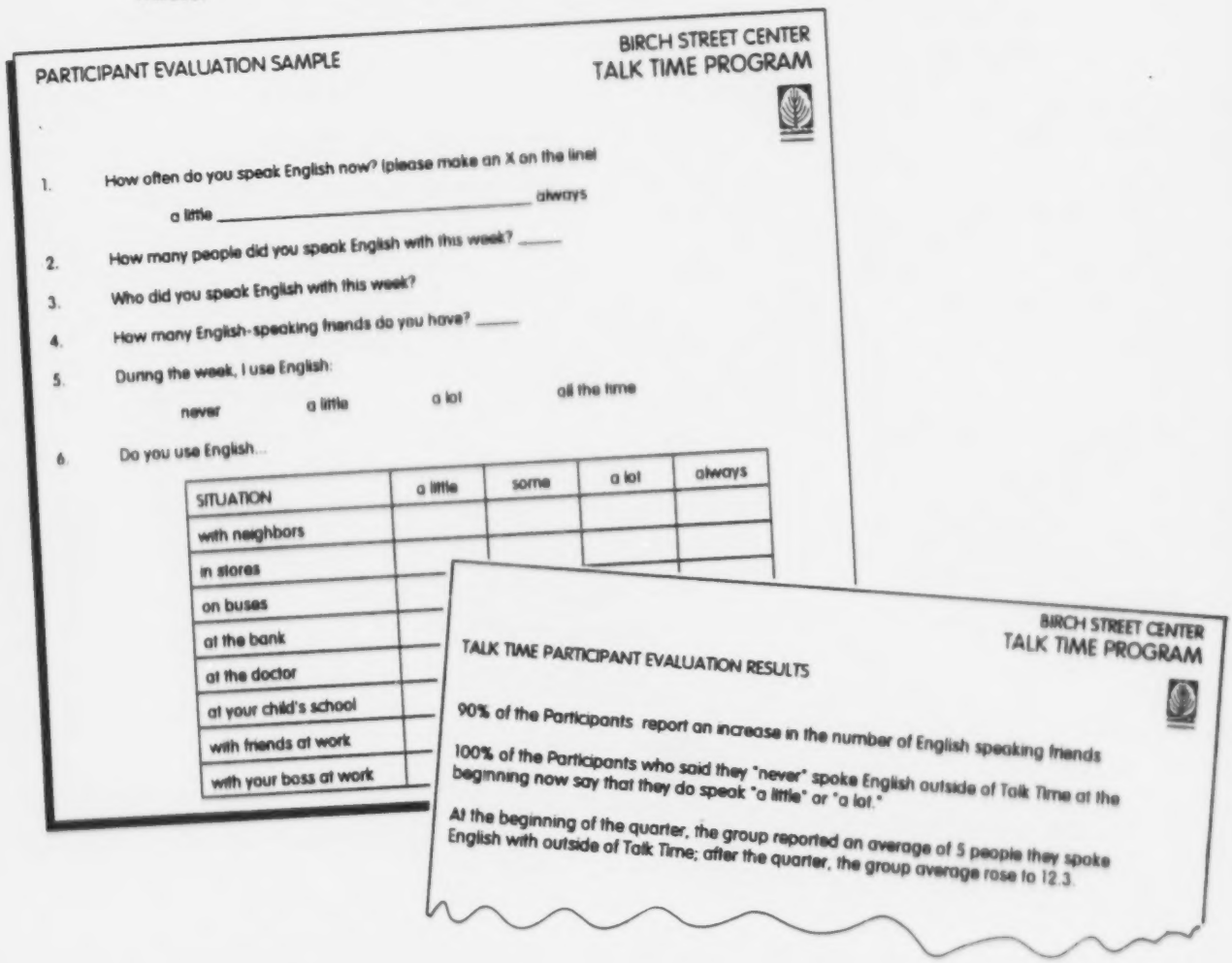
Pre- and post-questionnaires offer a method for collecting measurable information about the changes that occur in participants' lives. They can be conducted either in English or in the participant's first language with oral interpretation or written translation. Complete the initial questionnaire before or early in the Talk Time schedule and then repeat it at the end of the Talk Time quarters. These questions ask participants to give a number, indicate a ranking, or answer an open-ended question. Ask all the participants the same questions twice - at the beginning and end of a quarter - then tabulate the differences for each participant and the group as a whole.

When

Since most participants come to the program office for a personal intake process before Talk Time begins for the quarter, ask the questions as part of the Participant Information Form. Participants who arrive for their first Talk Time session after the beginning of the quarter can be taken aside by the Talk Time session coordinator for their intake process at that time.

How

You want to collect the participants' answers to the questions; you are not testing the participants' ability to understand the questions in English. So, do anything you can to make sure all the participants do understand. Have written or taped translations of the questions available. Or have an interpreter on hand to ask the questions and get the answers. Or have participants get into groups by language to discuss the questions together then fill out their individual questionnaires. Have the participants mark a line graph, give a number, or tell their answer. Tabulate all the responses to the pre-session questions then compare them to the numbers gathered after the quarter for both individual participants and the group as a whole.



PARTICIPANT EVALUATION SAMPLE

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

1. How often do you speak English now? (please make an X on the line)

   a little _____ always

2. How many people did you speak English with this week? ____

3. Who did you speak English with this week?

4. How many English-speaking friends do you have? ____

5. During the week, I use English:

   never a little a lot all the time

6. Do you use English...

SITUATION	a little	some	a lot	always
with neighbors				
in stores				
on buses				
at the bank				
at the doctor				
at your child's school				
with friends at work				
with your boss at work				

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

TALK TIME PARTICIPANT EVALUATION RESULTS

90% of the Participants report an increase in the number of English speaking friends

100% of the Participants who said they "never" spoke English outside of Talk Time at the beginning now say that they do speak "a little" or "a lot."

At the beginning of the quarter, the group reported an average of 5 people they spoke English with outside of Talk Time; after the quarter, the group average rose to 12.3.

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■ Anecdotal Information

As a complement to the measurable means of documenting change described above, anecdotal information paints a richly detailed picture of the personal changes in people's lives. Participants might share stories during, before, or after a Talk Time session. Make a conscientious effort to collect these individual tales of confidence. Doing anything for the first time may be an indicator of confidence! During your Talk Time orientation, instruct your volunteer facilitators to encourage their conversation partners to share their English adventures with them during the Talk Time session. Ask your facilitators to write down these treasures to include in a big book of anecdotes. These stories of courage and success can become the basis of future volunteer and participant recruitment messages, illustrations in funder reports, the narrative for a photo exhibit or album of all your participants, or an article in the local newspaper.

I got a job!
my daughter was sick this week and I called the doctor.
I had a problem with my neighbor... and yesterday we talked about it for the first time.

Program Evaluation

The participant evaluation process tells you if participants have reached the goal you set out for them in the SO THEY CAN section of the mission statement. Program evaluation gathers information about the program from volunteer facilitators and participants to 1) improve the session design, 2) plan sessions around new topics of interest, or 3) alter your participant recruitment methods. The recommendations suggested during an evaluation process can help develop a program that brings success for more participants more of the time. Here are some methods for evaluating Talk Time sessions:

- ### Session Debriefing

  Schedule time after each session to get feedback from facilitators; use the following questions or See SESSION PLAN GUIDELINES page 90

  What went well tonight?

  What could we do differently?

  Do we need to make any changes in the groups?

  Did the participants talk most of the time?

  Did they talk with each other?

- ### Videotape of Talk Time Sessions

  First videotape one session early in the quarter and one at the end. Then review the tapes looking for changes in group dynamics, individual participant progress, and facilitator skill.

- ### Written Questionnaires from Facilitators

  Ask facilitators to return questionnaires asking a wide assortment of questions. Here are some possibilities.

TALK TIME FACILITATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

How would you rate your experience in Talk Time this year?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

OK Good Fantastic!

What successes have you had this year?

What challenges have you had this year?

How can the program help you with these challenges?

What worked well in the lessons you planned?

What do you like about the program?

What needs improvement?

What helps you facilitate a good group?

What doesn't help? What hinders you?

What training did you attend? What were the most useful parts of the training?

■ Focus Group of Participants

- At the end of a Talk Time quarter or once a year, gather all or some of the participants together in a focus group. The focus group facilitator can be an outside person or someone familiar with the participants but not one of the staff or Talk Time volunteer facilitators.

- Arrange the participants into groups by language if possible. You want honest, candid information from the participants; this is not an English-only conversation experience. Assure the group that their opinions are valued and will help make the Talk Time program even better. All their responses will be collected as a group and their opinions will be kept anonymous.

- Have someone write answers to the questions on newsprint during the meeting so that all can see. Ask one person to serve as a note taker who will record the ideas in English, or tape record the focus group session and transcribe it later.

- Give the groups a period of time to discuss the questions in their first language:

  What did you like about Talk Time?
  What did you not like about Talk Time?
  How did Talk Time help your English?
  What activities helped you learn?
  What activities did not help you learn?
  What suggestions do you have to improve the group?

- Collect the composite responses from each group and analyze.

TALK TIME SESSION DEVELOPMENT

SESSION MANAGEMENT

At long last it's time to think about the general plan for the sessions. How will you schedule the activities for the Talk Time session? How will you break up the whole group into smaller groups? Will there be large group activities at the beginning, at the end, or in the middle? It is important to have answers to session management questions like these before planning activities for the first session.

SESSION SCHEDULE

A regular time for holding the weekly Talk Time session has already been determined based on who you are trying to reach - two hours on Wednesday mornings or Thursday evenings, for example. A session schedule refers to how you spend that time during individual sessions. Plan several activities for both large and small groups with a mid-session social break. During the break, former partners or group members can mingle and greet new participants, providing a great opportunity for more relaxed language to come out. Often, it is during the breaks that ideas for future themes emerge. Throughout the session, including the break, someone must be designated to encourage the use of visuals to assist with comprehension, intervene when there are lulls in conversation, and move people to other groups to provide more opportunities for conversation. Setting the session schedule determines who needs to do what during the session.

Here's a possible Talk Time session schedule:

6:00 p.m.	set up table with nametags, marking pens, and sign-in sheet
	set up table with visuals and objects
	arrange chairs and tables
	arrange break supplies (food, hot water, cups, etc.)
6:45	greet volunteers and participants
	assess newcomers
7:00	welcome everyone
	conduct full-group warm-up activity
	greet latecomers
7:15	divide into small groups or pairs
8:00	BREAK
8:15	return to small groups or form new groups
8:45	return to full-group closing activity
9:00	debrief with facilitators (15 min.)
9:15	clean-up

GROUP FORMATION

Gathering The Whole Group

The total number of participants will be determined by the space at the site you have selected. Providing a whole group activity at the beginning, middle, or end enhances conversation, helps familiarize everyone with each other, and smooths later transitions from small group to small group or partner to partner. Beginning with a large group activity and then separating into small groups or partners is an easy way to change the pace of the session. Even with a large space, you will not want to keep everyone together as one large group for very much of the session.

Forming The Beginning Group

Participant feedback suggests that beginning English speakers prefer conversing with other participants at their same level of English fluency. So, most Talk Time programs divide into smaller groups according to English fluency level. Talk Time programs that include beginning level participants usually separate them into groups once the level of English fluency is known. Designate one facilitator or the Talk Time session coordinator to assess first-time participants as soon as they walk through the door. The assessment may be part of the initial "getting to know you" conversation. Participants who struggle to tell their names and addresses could be encouraged to try the beginning group rather than a more advanced group in which everyone can maintain a conversation easily. See PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT page 60

For participant and facilitator comfort, assess participants right away and lead them to the right room or area based on this assessment. You may end up having two Talk Time sessions going on at once: one for beginners and one for more advanced. The format and topic for beginners and more advanced participants might be similar - a large group warm-up, small group activity, break, etc. - but the activities would likely differ.

Creating and Changing Small Groups

Changing groups and group size often proves challenging for both facilitators and limited English speakers because of the new voices, accents, rates of speech, and temporarily lost sense of comradery from the first group. Yet the very act of changing groups provides participants with a brief but much needed break while moving from one group and one activity to another. It also minimizes the problem of occasional mismatches and helps facilitators who are not yet accomplished at conversing with very limited English speakers.

Small group size can vary from 2 to 6 limited English speakers for each volunteer facilitator. Groups larger than that tend to require more skill on the facilitators' part to keep people talking to each other rather than reverting to a teacher / class model of taking turns.

Some programs have a wandering facilitator who observes each small group in action and makes any necessary changes by moving individuals from a beginning group to a more advanced or vice versa during the break. This observing facilitator could also rearrange groups in order to make the groups more balanced. For example, there may be several domineering participants in the session, each one of whom dominates his small group. The observing facilitator may put all of the dominant participants in one group, leaving all the quiet ones in their own groups. Similarly, the more outspoken participants may be the best match for a facilitator who all too often seems to be the focus of the conversations. Quieter participants may be better served with a facilitator who is able to be equally quiet and willing to give participants a lot of time to participate.

If there appears to be tension because of gender, ethnicity, or personality, the observing facilitator could also make changes as necessary. For example, sometimes a married couple may come to the Talk Time session together and announce that they must be placed in the same group. While this sometimes works out, more often than not it does not, because one member of the team is more dominant in speaking out. Because of this, the couple may start in the same group - as they requested - but then be encouraged to try different groups after the first or second activity.

Selecting Group Leaders / Facilitators

You also need to find appropriate people to lead different groups: the whole group, each small group, and the beginners' group. Some facilitators may have a preference for working with beginners or with more advanced participants. One Talk Time program has a core group of beginning level facilitators augmented each week with two or three rotating facilitators. Thus, all facilitators get to experience the beginning level Talk Time. Those who enjoy it and do well may become part of the core beginning group for the next quarter. Some Talk Time programs designate small groups and their facilitators from the first session. In these sessions, the activities change, but the small groups are always the same, building loyalty and consistency. Other Talk Time programs change facilitators and groups throughout the session to keep the Talk Time lively.

SESSION PLANNING

The Keys to Communication

Deciding on an interesting topic, developing session activities that get everyone chatting, gathering fascinating objects and visuals to stimulate further communication - all combine to create a great Talk Time session plan. We will first look at the keys to communication - the importance of visuals and realia and specific language skills that foster communication between two people with limited common language.

Visuals and Realia

There is good reason for the expression, "A picture is worth a thousand words." An essential element of every Talk Time program is a collection of materials and objects. Communication flows more easily for participants and facilitators when visuals are used. Pictures, photographs, drawings, and objects are essential Talk Time elements. But don't neglect the other senses as well. Food, music - even tape recordings of market or street sounds - can stimulate fascinating conversations. Realia is an ESL term for "the real thing" and nothing stimulates language better than seeing and holding the actual object while discussing it. Include art supplies for creating two or three dimensional representations in your Talk Time kit.

■ Suggestions for Visuals and Realia

Basic Talk Time Supplies

- blank paper, pencils, and colored pens
- posters for the walls (commercial or handmade)
- illustrated books or magazines
- maps and a globe
- chalk board and big paper
- colored modeling clay
- scissors, tape, and glue
- collected pictures of the countries represented by limited English speaking participants (*National Geographic Magazine* remains the best source)

Culture Boxes

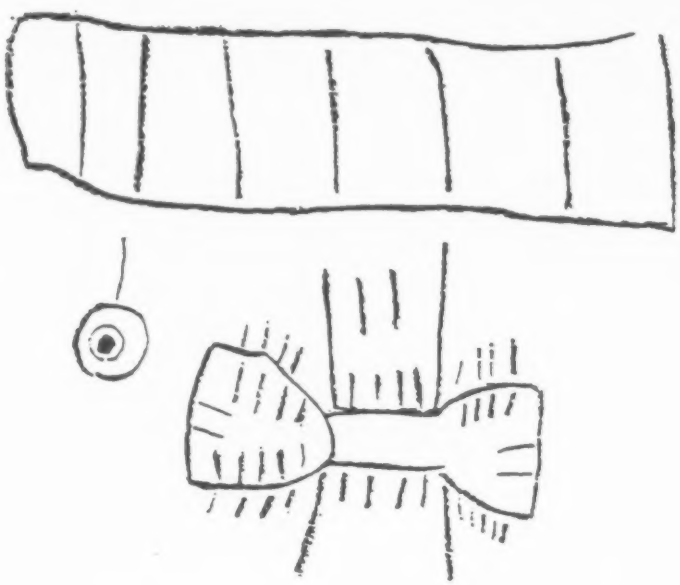
In one program, all of the Talk Time participants first gathered into groups by culture and discussed which objects they could bring from home that would best represent daily life in a number of categories - family, home, work, holidays, religion, music, and others. The program coordinators asked to borrow the objects which were collected into culture boxes decorated by the groups. Each culture group presented a brief overview of all the material in the boxes from their culture to the whole Talk Time. From then on, participants were able to use any of the items to further communication for any topic during future Talk Time sessions.

Topic Specific Materials

In addition to general materials that are always on hand during Talk Time, collect specific materials for each topic. For example, if the topic is home health care, you might have over the counter medicines, a thermometer, bandages, and herbal and folk medicines as well. For the topic of families, have everyone bring photographs of their families including, if possible, some very old ones. All Talk Time members can become eager sources of materials, although some items are best brought by the program coordinator. At the end of one session, announce the topic for the next week and encourage everyone to bring appropriate material with a rich cultural mix for a topic such as New Year's celebrations. Just be sure to include visuals and realia
into every session plan.

■ Using Visuals and Realia

Simply put, visuals and realia show what we want to say. They help demonstrate and illustrate the ideas we want to communicate. When asked to draw a picture of the house she lived in as a child, a Lao woman, Ly, created the picture below. The central figure, a three dimensional image of her home from a bird's eye view, is placed near her garden, and the circles show "a pig in a pot." By answering, "What is it? Is it a _____?" Ly was able to communicate a great deal about the life she knew so well. Without her drawing as a resource, she wouldn't have been able to describe her home with her limited English; without her drawing for clues, her partner wouldn't have been able to guess any of the details for Ly to confirm. By the end of the session, Ly said, "The house is on poles. We eat food from the garden. A pig is in a pot." Ly learned a few new English words - poles, garden, fire - and her partner learned a lot about life in a Hmong community.



Communication Skills

Varying the activities according to group size and communication function gives participants practice with many different aspects of communication. All of the following essential skills promote conversation and can be incorporated into Talk Time activities:

- Asking and answering questions

Fluent speakers do both, so it's important to provide opportunities for participants to ask questions of each other as well as answer questions directed toward them. Guessing is a vital skill as well.

- Discussing a topic of mutual interest

Activities that promote discussion give participants practice in asking and answering questions, turn-taking, pausing, breaking into the conversation, and listening skills.

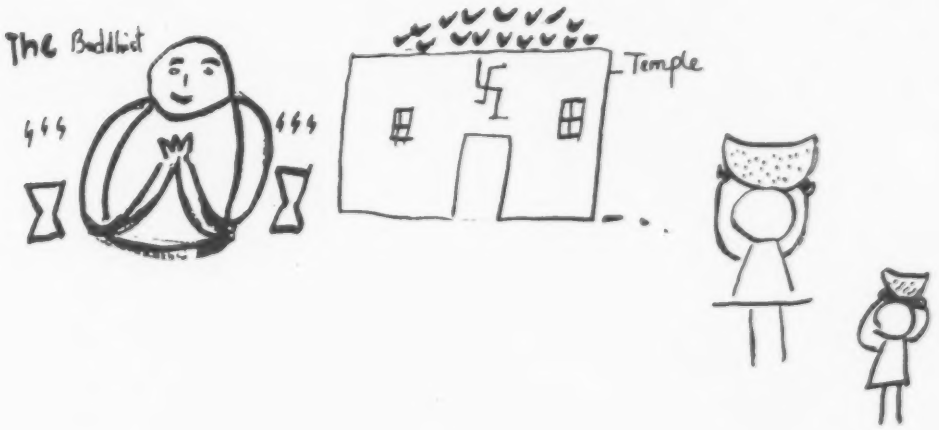
- Presenting information

When participants are asked to speak from their experience and culture, they get better at stringing related sentences together to present a detailed description.

PROFILE: Mothers in Hell

In one Talk Time session, a small group of lower level Vietnamese women told their facilitator that it was a Buddhist holiday that day, and that they were going to go to temple to pray for their mothers. Curious, the facilitator wanted to find out more about the holiday, its meaning, background, and traditions. Through a lengthy process of asking different types of questions, guessing, clarifying, summarizing, drawing, and miming, a fascinating story unfolded. One of the keys to getting the participants to communicate a story somewhat above their language level, was the facilitator's genuine interest in the story and refusal to give up trying to understand what the women were saying.

The holiday originated with a mother named Thanh Đê, who went to the temple one day to offer rice to the monks there. But because she had only a small amount of rice to offer, her prayers went unheeded. In anger, she killed and cooked a dog and offered it to the monk. The monk, however, who was a vegetarian, "understood the mother" and threw the food on the ground. Hmmm....."understood the mother." Did she disguise the meat? Did she try to trick the monk? The facilitator mimed offering a plate to the monk, and asked, "Did the mother say 'I give you some dog meat' or did she say 'Here are some vegetables for you'?" The women verified the latter. One participant was trying to describe how the mother disguised the meat using green onions and ..... suddenly she walked across the room and came back with a basket of fake fruit and vegetables, triumphantly holding some garlic - the word she didn't know but needed for her explanation.



"So, she offered dog meat to the monk. He was angry and threw it on the ground. When the mother died she went to hell. Her son was very sad. Her son went to hell to ask if his mother could go to heaven." The facilitator summarized what she understood so far, but still had a lot of questions. She asked the participants to draw pictures of the story, but they were a bit hesitant. "I really like your story, but now I understand 60%. I want to understand 100%. If you draw some pictures they will help me understand more."

One women drew a picture of the mother in hell, and the facilitator wondered what she was standing on. "Is that grass?" she asked. The women didn't have the words to explain what it was, but one grabbed the marker and vigorously drew pointy tops on each "blade of grass." Oh.....a bed of nails!

Eventually, the facilitator found out that the mother was allowed into heaven, and the participants all learned that through hard work and determination - and with the guidance of a patient facilitator - they could communicate and even teach.

Topic Selection

Talk Time programs have used several methods to determine topics. Either ask participants at their initial interview for possible topics of interest, or spend time during your first Talk Time session to discuss possible topics with the whole group. Once you have a list of commonly named topics, either plan a schedule for the quarter - allowing for the possibility for change - and present it to the group, or negotiate topics each week during a brief time at the end of each session.

When discussing possible topics, bring in visuals to reinforce comprehension. For example, a checklist of possible topics may include grocery shopping, talking during a break at work, going to a child's school, and going to a job interview. Include visuals next to the written checklist for each of these topics to spark more interest. Possible topic ideas are endless. They should be chosen to suit the needs and interests of the participants.

Once participants are separated by fluency level, topics may vary according to length of time in the United States. For example, someone new to the United States may be most interested in survival topics - buying groceries or calling the doctor - while someone with more English skills who has been in the United States for several years may be more interested in discussing personal and professional relationships or cultural norms in the United States.

Each general topic can lead to many other more specific aspects. Once you have a list of possible topics, ask a group of participants to help you determine which particular aspect is of greatest interest or concern to them. "What do you want to know or share about the topic?" and "What do you want to be able to do?" You may easily presume that participants mean car insurance when they chose transportation when, in fact, they want to know more about riding the bus. With any specific topic, the session planner should design activities that bring out the participants' knowledge and experience.

Conversation Activities

The goal of Talk Time is to give the participants many opportunities to practice their new English. People want to talk - and will talk more - when the Talk Time session activities fully involve them. So when planning a session, include several different kinds of activities to add interest to the topic. Staying with only one activity can get old and if it's not going well, can make participants uncomfortable and uneasy about their English ability.

You will want to vary the activities around a certain topic so that participants have a chance to ask questions, explain, discuss, and problem-solve. In doing all of these, you will also want to promote the exchange of cultural and personal experience. For variety, change the group size with different activities. Design some activities for small groups, some for pairs, and some for large groups.

Keep in mind that it is usually easier for people to talk one-on-one rather than in front of a large group. For this reason, beginning an activity with one-on-one conversation is often a good start. You can start with participants sharing information about a picture or object with a partner, then have them move around and share with several people (still one-on-one), and then have them present it in front of a small group. Organized this way, the activities build on comfort level and still provide a lot of practice with the same topic.

With large group activities, whether for beginners or more advanced participants, there are several ways to get whole group participation. Everyone could turn and talk to a partner, everyone could stand up, talk to one person one-on-one and then move on to another person one-on-one, or everyone could sit in a circle and take turns talking one at a time. Obviously, the latter technique is limited in terms of the amount of speaking practice participants would get and therefore works best with small groups. Participants may be nervous about speaking in front of a group of 20 and may not want to listen to 19 other people going around the circle one at a time! However, by listening to the four other people talk in their small group, they may get involved in a topic and join in.

All of the group conversation patterns described on the next two pages present a structure for conversation that can be adapted to any topic.

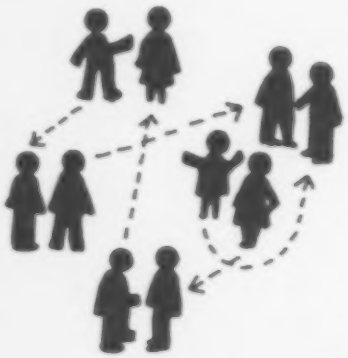
■ Group Conversation Patterns

Random 1 to 1: The participants walk around the room; they find one person to talk with; when they are finished they move to another person.

Example

Talk Time Bingo

Divide a bingo card into 9 squares. In each square draw or paste a picture of a food item. Find one person who likes the item in one square on the card; write the name of the person next to the item; find another person who likes another item; move around the room until you have found people who like each item of food on the card.

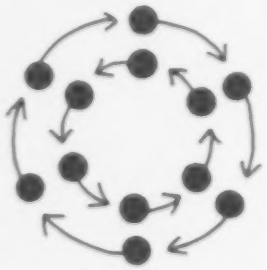


Structured 1 to 1: Divide the whole group into two groups; form either two circles or two lines of people who are facing each other; everyone talks to the person facing him until the bell rings; then one line moves to the right to the next person; everyone talks with the new person facing him; keep moving around until everyone has spoken to every other person in the opposite group. (A bell may need to ring twice for each pairing - once to give one partner time to talk and again to give the other partner a turn to talk.)

Example

Share An Object

Ask everyone in Talk Time to bring an item from home that illustrates or signifies a holiday; each person holds up the object while his partner asks questions to get information about it.

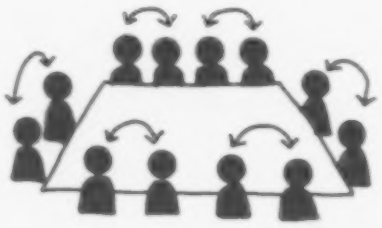


Matched 1 to 1: Have the participants sit in the whole group where they hear or see the general directions for the activity; then the participants turn to the person next to them; the participants do the same thing at the same time; after a period of time, they turn to the person on their other side to repeat the activity.

Example

Draw A Picture

The participants are given 5 minutes to draw pictures of the houses they lived in as children; taking turns with their partners, they share stories about their pictures and answer questions about them.



Whole or small group presentation: Have the participants sit in a circle and talk briefly to the whole or small group while all the others listen.

Example

What I've Learned

At the end of each Talk Time session, the participants gather together in a circle for the final 15 minutes to share one thing they have learned that day from their conversations.

▪ Other Conversation Activities

In addition to the previous group conversation patterns, include activities that promote oral language.

Four Corners

One way to ensure a lively Talk Time session is to have different areas set up for conversation around a topic. All of the Talk Time members start in one of the areas and then rotate to another. For example, the Literacy Action Center Talk Time program planned a session on "favorite things." The first activity, favorite seasons, included pictures of each season in each of the four corners of the room. Members went to their favorite season and talked with others about why that season is their favorite. Next, the four corners held posterboards full of pictures of favorite hobbies, and members went to the corner where their favorite hobby was depicted. The possibilities for this topic and others are endless - favorite foods, holidays, sports, jobs, etc. When arranged this way, the whole group can participate at once, there is a clear break between activities, and everyone gets scrambled up with each new "favorite" discussion.

Role Plays

Role plays allow the participants to speak more freely with a different voice. The biggest challenge lies in getting the participants to fully understand what it means to assume another identity. Physical contrivances may help. Telephones, special clothing, paper bag puppets, and cardboard box TV's have all been used successfully to get participants to come out of themselves and into another persona.

Role plays work well with small or large groups depending on the topic and how the activity is organized. For example, a role play of a minor car accident may involve everyone in a small group of 6 people - 2 car drivers, a passenger, a pedestrian, a bicyclist, and a police officer. A role play of an evening elementary school open house at a child's school may lend itself to a larger group including several teachers, several parents, and the principal. A parent-teacher conference may work best in pairs, only later to be shared in front of a larger group.

Profile: Something Old, Something New.....

"We're off to Hawaii for our honeymoon!" were the last words spoken on August 23rd as Dominguez Garcia and Sun Nguyen were wed with both "families" present to help cut the cake, pose for pictures, and send them off into wedded bliss. Posing as brides, grooms, siblings, parents, and friends, the Talk Time participants of the St. James ESL program did a fantastic job at quickly entering into their new identities and exploring what it meant to be getting a new family connection. They learned how to reach a concensus with people from other cultures, about family relationships, and weddings in different traditions.

As the bride and groom headed toward Hawaii and the evening came to a close, the participants seemed reluctant to shed their new identities. Comments like "He's not good enough for my daughter!" and "My son is looking for a wife," demonstrated their acceptance and excitement about this new Talk Time activity.

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Warm-up Activities

Warm-up activities set the tone for the session and promote communication. They get everyone moving around and comfortably chatting with each other at the beginning of each session. Ask everyone to draw a picture, pick an object, tell a brief story, answer one question, fill in a chart - anything to get them to walk around the room or chat with one neighbor. Good warm-up activities involve everyone, are short and easy to explain, and usually relate to the topic for the session.

Session Planning Guidelines

How do all these considerations lead toward a well-planned Talk Time session? The following series of preliminary session plans evolved from the Session Plan Guidelines for choosing topics and designing activities. The Guidelines direct the session planner through a list of questions that - when answered yes - will assure a successful Talk Time session where everyone is interested in the topic, given opportunities to participate, share cultural information, and wander off on tangents that occur naturally in conversation. Health Care was selected as a large Talk Time topic, then broken down into three specific areas of interest to the participants that will be used in three Talk Time sessions - Nutrition, Fire and Accident Prevention, and Traditional, Conventional, and Alternative Medical Practices. The planner referred to the Guidelines when creating the outline for each session topic then sketched out various activities - warm-ups, demonstrations, discussions, guest speakers, projects, storytelling, categorizing, and role plays - for different groupings - whole groups, pairs, and small groups. After completing each outline, the planner assessed the session plan by answering the Guideline questions.

SESSION PLANNING GUIDELINES

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

The checklist below provides guidelines for both topic and activity selection:

- ☐ Is the topic interesting to the participants? Does it relate to their lives?
- ☐ Do the topic and activities encourage the participants to talk more than the facilitators?
- ☐ Does the facilitator learn from the conversation?
- ☐ Can everyone participate? Do the activities take the varying speaking and literacy levels of the participants into account?
- ☐ Are the visuals and realia relevant to the topic and included in the activities? Do they promote conversation and enhance communication?
- ☐ Do the activities allow for the participants to develop tangents that extend the activity?
- ☐ Do they allow for personal and cultural exchange?
- ☐ Does the session plan begin with a warm-up and contain a variety of activities with different groupings?

TOPIC:

Nutrition

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Pictures of food, drawings of meals and people who would be there, clay, and real food!

- warm up (Random one-to-one): Have everyone draw their favorite meal and the people who would be at the meal. Share by having everyone stand up & mingle. Clap hands or ring bell when partners should change. Make it quick.

- Role play (small groups) Role play a typical meal in many countries (Ethiopia, the Ukraine, Vietnam)

TOPIC:

Fire and Accident Prevention

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Pictures of places where accidents happen (homes, boats, yards, parks, on traffic) and items often involved (all home appliances, cars, bicycles, sports equipment)

- warm up (Pairs): Have everyone pantomime an accident that has happened to them or someone they know. Have partner make guesses. Share with large group if time.

- Discussion (small groups):
  - what are common causes of fires and accidents in your home country?
  - Tell me about one accident you or a family member has had
  - what's your biggest fear?

TOPIC:

Medical Practices - conventional, Traditional, and alternative

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Pictures of health practitioners and treatments; ointments, medicines, herbs, tea, bandages + other treatment items

- warm up (Pairs): Put all props on center table. Have everyone select one item and briefly talk about it with a partner. OR have lots of duplicate items. Have everyone select one item and then find someone else with same item.

- Demonstration (small groups) Have everyone bring diff. teas, ointments, and other treatments from home. Discuss & demo. different practices using these items.

- Discussion (small groups) on uses of food:
  - Food for guests
  - Food as rewards
  - Food & children
  - Food as medicine and treatment
  - Food for special occasions

- Category Activity: (small groups)
  present a large assortment of real food or pictures of food on a table. groups sort the food into 2 categories using the pairs below or deciding on their own.
  dry / fresh
  plant / animal
  familiar / unfamiliar
  like / dislike
  hot / cold
  healthy / unhealthy
  Discuss why.

- Guest Speakers: (large group)
  - member of the fire department
  - emergency room nurse
  - county extension agent
  - building contractor

- Demonstration
  use pictures of different accidents and injuries and ask:
  - what do you do for....?

- Story Activity: (small groups)
  Have everyone tell stories about:
  - the time my grandmother made me feel better
  - the biggest accident or injury I ever had
  - the health practitioner I liked the most or least.

- Discussion (small groups):
  Have pictures of several different illnesses (cold, fever, backache, etc). Questions -
  - who treats the ailment?
  - what supplies do they use?

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BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

Topic: Nutrition

The checklist below provides guidelines for both topic and activity selection:

☑ Is the topic interesting to the participants? Does it relate to their lives?
Yes. The women (in this all female Talk Time) requested it when we brainstormed topics to discuss.

☑ Do the topic and activities encourage the participants to talk more than the facilitators? Yes - doing typical family meal activity, discussion, and types of food discussion all encourage more participant talk than facilitator talk.

☑ Does the facilitator learn from the conversation?
Yes! About 1) typical family meal in several countries
2) uses of food
3) categories of food

☑ Can everyone participate? Do the activities take the varying speaking and literacy levels of the participants into account? yes - they will all be able to talk about food in their country. Drawings will help.

☑ Are the visuals and realia relevant to the topic and included in the activities? Do they promote conversation and enhance communication? yes. Pictures of lots of different kinds of food for food category activity. Drawings - as needed - to demonstrate typical meal - food and seating plan; add drawings to pictures in food category activity. clay - have some at tables to better represent unfamiliar food items (in U.S.); real food - to eat!

☑ Do the activities allow for the participants to develop tangents that extend the activity? Oh yes! Food/meal stories. Special occasions. Food preparation, cooking, sharing recipes - lots of room for tangents.

☑ Do they allow for personal and cultural exchange?
Yes! Lots of cultural and personal sharing.

☑ Does the session plan begin with a warm-up and contain a variety of activities with different groupings?
warm up → yes. Other activities – drawings, possible role-play, discussion, clay, pictures for categories.

Topic: Fire and Accident Prevention

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

The checklist below provides guidelines for both topic and activity selection:

☑ Is the topic interesting to the participants? Does it relate to their lives?

Yes - the majority checked off this specific topic on the topic questionnaire we gave them.

☑ Do the topic and activities encourage the participants to talk more than the facilitators?

Yes - focus on 1) home country
2) past experiences w/ accidents
3) safety fears/concerns now ? 5) what do you need for good health?
4) what do you do for.....?

☑ Does the facilitator learn from the conversation?

Yes, because of above

☑ Can everyone participate? Do the activities take the varying speaking and literacy levels of the participants into account?

Yes, but we'll need lots of realia to help

☑ Are the visuals and realia relevant to the topic and included in the activities? Do they promote conversation and enhance communication?

where accidents often occur

Pictures - of places (homes, boats, yards, parks, traffic scenes) and things (appliances); first aid supplies; pictures of wounds, burns, broken arms, etc.

☑ Do the activities allow for the participants to develop tangents that extend the activity? Yes - health care/accidents always bring up stories! (who hasn't had an accident?) also room for participants to ask questions of each other, to get more info. about emergencies here in the U.S. and what participants have done, what help is available and how to get it.

☑ Do they allow for personal and cultural exchange?

Yes! Lots of cultural + personal sharing

☑ Does the session plan begin with a warm-up and contain a variety of activities with different groupings?

warm-up → yes

other activities → discussion, guest speaker, demonstration, possibly the project to collect information and display it.

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Topic: Medical Practices

BIRCH STREET CENTER
TALK TIME PROGRAM

The checklist below provides guidelines for both topic and activity selection:

☑ Is the topic interesting to the participants? Does it relate to their lives?

Yes - participants are always talking about ailments during the break. Seems we're always cutting off good health related discussions. It was checked off by many on our initial "Intake Forms" as being of interest.

☑ Do the topic and activities encourage the participants to talk more than the facilitators?

Yes ① do cultural sharing - what's done in their 1st country?
② ask them to describe their medical experiences here in the U.S.

☑ Does the facilitator learn from the conversation?

Yes ① about medical practices in other countries
② about participant experiences in the U.S.

☑ Can everyone participate? Do the activities take the varying speaking and literacy levels of the participants into account?

Yes, but we need visuals or objects for body parts / ailments / health problems / different remedies / remedies

Bandages, medecine bottles, tea, aloe plants - have everyone bring something "healing" from home

☑ Are the visuals and realia relevant to the topic and included in the activities? Do they promote conversation and enhance communication?

Yes - Each person describes what she has brought - talk about one object on table for warm-up.

☑ Do the activities allow for the participants to develop tangents that extend the activity?

Yes - may bring up lots of health stories from participants' pasts, especially with "Tell Stories" activity

☑ Do they allow for personal and cultural exchange?

Yes, because we ask specifically for each person to bring one "healing" item; then we ask about experiences in 1st country and then experiences in the U.S.

☑ Does the session plan begin with a warm-up and contain a variety of activities with different groupings?

warm-up ⇒ yes, other activites: discussion, chart, stories, demonstration

Putting It All Together: Three Program Profiles

Below are profiles and sample session plans from three Talk Time programs in Washington state - Mason County Literacy, Bellevue Community College, and South Seattle Community College. These three Talk Time programs have very different groups of participants with specific interests and needs. While the topics vary to meet those needs, all of the session plan activities promote cultural exchange among the group. The activities are similar in that they encourage participants to talk more than the volunteers, enable facilitators to learn from the participants, provide for full participation, use visuals and realia, and allow for reasonable tangents. The previous section presented preliminary session plan outlines using the guidelines. Now you will see actual session plans with detailed activity directions for the session leader. We hope that the Guidelines and these session plans will help you create session plans that set the stage for genuine and vibrant communication in your Talk Time program.

PROFILE: In the Driver's Seat

■ Program: Mason County Literacy

Mason County Literacy operates a community-based and life-skill focused Talk Time program for the Latino community in a small rural logging town. This Talk Time program gives participants the specific skills they request to more fully function in their community. The topics suggested by participants contain clear goals:

- to give participants the tools to understand their position in light of **United States immigration policy**
- to celebrate the history of **civil rights** involvement in the United States
- to bring in health care providers to inform participants about **contagious diseases** and immunization services for their families
- to bring medics into the Talk Time to introduce participants to **emergency procedures** and the language needed to respond to emergencies

■ Session Plans

Participants described problems getting a driver's license, so several Talk Time sessions were developed to prepare them for visiting the Drivers License Office and taking the test. They brought in the local traffic safety coordinator to familiarize the participants with common road hazards, driving precautions, rules of the road, road signs, and the driver's license office itself.

Supplies Needed

- pictures or drawings of different vehicles - cars, motorcycles, trucks, buses, vans, farming vehicles (each table needs a complete set)
- picture or drawing of the inside of a Driver's Licensing Office
- visuals of common road signs - speed limit, stop, no U-Turn, etc.
- a map of the town drawn on a big piece of paper and toy vehicles

Warm-up:

At each table, place a set of the pictures or drawings of different vehicles. Encourage participants to select one picture to briefly talk about their experiences with that particular vehicle. Possible questions might be: *Which vehicles have you driven? When? Where? Why? How old were you when you first drove a car / truck / bus / tractor? In your first country, do you need a license to drive? How do you get a license? What are the rules for getting a license? What are the rules of the road in your first country? How do people drive in the cities? How do people drive in the country?*

Role Play:

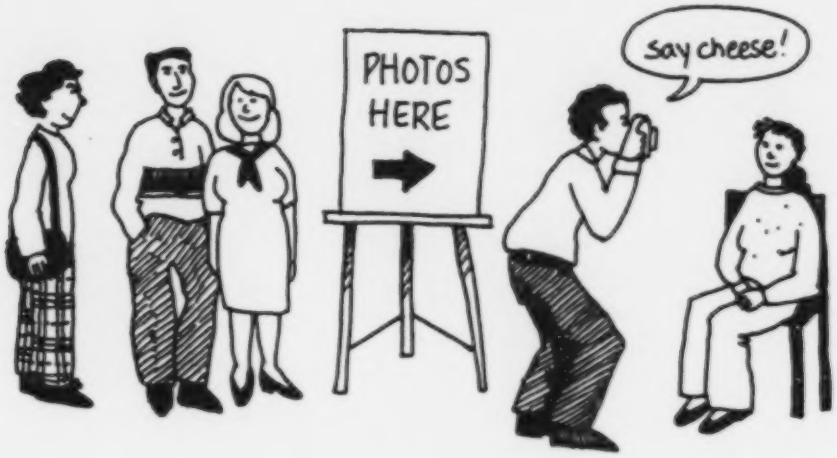
In small groups ask, *Who has been to the Driver's Licensing Office?* Try to find out how much the participants know and what they have experienced there. In order to get everyone to participate in the discussion, be prepared to ask, *Who has heard stories about the Licensing Office? What have you heard?* and *How do you get a license here?*

To prompt discussion, have a picture or drawing of a floorplan of the interior of the Licensing Office. Ask questions about what happens in each area: photo taking, written test, eye test, driving test, application form, and first time or renewal of licenses. Ask, *Why are there several lines?*

Have each member of a small group take a role: one licensing clerk and three or four participants in line. Let participants decide why they are standing in line: to have a photograph taken, to get an application, to take the written test, to take the driving test, etc. Role play standing in line and talking with the clerk. This will bring out the participants' expectations and experiences with the Licensing Office. Following the role play, discuss problems that came up. For example, "The clerk didn't understand my English," or "Other people in line were impatient," etc.

Demonstration:

Using the visuals of common road signs, ask participants to name the signs and describe what each one means. With the map of your town on the large piece of paper, use toy cars to drive around the town. Have participants give each other destinations and describe what they are doing as they move through the town.



Simulation:

As an extension of the previous Role Play, transform the entire room by designating different stations in the room: a table to get driver's license booklets in English and Spanish, a table for applications, a table where photos are taken, a table to sign up for the driver's license test - both written and driving tests - and even a space to pretend to take the driving test (someone can be the staff person giving the driving test). Divide participants into groups and have each group start out at a different station. Then practice using language they would need in that line, e.g. "May I have an application, please," or "I need a manual." Once they get what they need from one line, they are instructed to go to a different line. Facilitators or participants could be clerks. Have fun with it! In the photo line, for example, take photos of the participants and make mock licenses for future Talk Time sessions where showing ID may be required in various situations. Have participants wear the mock licenses as name tags. In small groups, discuss the simulation.

Guest Speaker:

Mason County Literacy invited Driver's Licensing Office personnel to their Talk Time program in order to improve relationships between native Spanish speaking clientele and office staff. Talk Time participants and Driver's Licensing Office employees both benefitted from this informal contact.

PROFILE: Family Album

■ Program: Bellevue Community College

Bellevue Community College has several large Talk Time groups - 30 to 60 participants - offered at different times. One of the Talk Time groups has many older participants from the former Soviet Union, Korea, and Taiwan. Although the participants want to improve their English, the program also fills a strong social need. The topics discussed are varied, but often have to do with holidays and events that occur in the United States and in Bellevue, a suburb of Seattle.

■ Session Plans

In this example, the topic began with Mother's Day and extended to activities that explored the role of mothers in families.

Supplies Needed:

- Talk Time members' family photographs
- pictures of families from many cultures, all with mothers included
- calendar
- pictures from newspapers or magazines celebrating or advertising Mother's Day in the United States

Warm-up:

Bring pictures of families from many cultures, all with mothers included. Place pictures together on a table where everyone can see them. Have everyone select a picture and take 1 or 2 minutes to create a story about his picture. Then for 10 minutes have them talk with as many people as possible to answer questions about the picture that they have chosen.

Warm-up:

Break into small groups and talk about one lesson they learned from their mother.

Discussion:

Use pictures from newspapers or magazines to assist the conversation. *Is there a Mother's Day in your first country?* A Russian couple in the session shared that there is a Mother's Day in Russia, but that it is always on the same date - which happens to be the husband's birthday. With a twinkle in her eye, a Korean woman then asked, "Well, who cooks dinner, then?" Be prepared to expand the conversation to include a discussion of Father's Day, Teachers' Day, or other special days.

Ask, *What makes a good mother? What are the challenges for mothers in your first country? What are the challenges for mothers here?* The conversation may include issues of single-parenting, two-parent careers, motherhood out of marriage, or anything else related to motherhood that the participants bring up for discussion. Ask, *What can be done about these challenges?* Another line of discussion could be, *What do you remember about your mother?* or, *What do you want your children and grandchildren to remember about you?*

Discussion:

Share family photographs or take a moment to draw your family. *Who is in the family?* It's amazing how much language comes out of a drawing that took only a few minutes to make. Since many of the Bellevue Community College Talk Time participants are older, it turned out that many are grandparents and they enjoyed talking about their grandchildren. A natural extension would be to ask how life will be different for their grandchildren than it was for them.

Role play:

Have small groups brainstorm situations that involve mothers - raising small children, handling teenagers, etc. Humorous stories may come up at this time. Share a brief story about your mother or father or about yourself in one of those roles. Then ask participants to share their stories. Role play common situations for mothers and share the role play with the larger group.

PROFILE: Nine to Five

■ Program: South Seattle Community College

South Seattle Community College also has several Talk Time groups per week, including one with a vocational ESL focus. All of SSCC's participants are on the waiting list to get into ESL classes. Because of the long wait, many participants must find employment before they get into ESL classes. The Vocational ESL Talk Time evolved in response to this situation. All the VESL Talk Time topics are related to workplace issues, from finding a job to asking for a promotion.

■ Session Plans

In this session, the focus is on interviewing for a job.

Supplies Needed:

- pictures of people doing different work tasks - washing dishes, word-processing at a desk, sewing, teaching, waiting on people in a restaurant, farming, nursing, cleaning, working in a factory, etc.

Warm-up:

As everyone enters the Talk Time room, pin to her back a picture of someone working at a job without letting her see the picture. Once everyone, facilitators included, has a picture on her back, have everyone mingle for a while and then find one partner; each person then looks at her partner's picture and asks her partner one yes / no question to find out what job is pictured on her own back. Continue to find partners and ask one yes / no question of each partner until everyone has guessed the identity of the job on her back.

Discussion:

Have all the members draw a picture of three things that they know how to do and are good at doing. Share and discuss with a partner. Then discuss - either with the entire group by moving about the room and talking with one person at a time or by breaking into small groups and sharing ideas. After this discussion, break into small groups and brainstorm all different kinds of jobs, based on the pictures in the warm-up or everyone's experience.

Discussion and Role Play:

Facilitators role play a good and bad interview for the entire group. After breaking into small groups, participants discuss what's good and what's bad about the interview. Cultural information such as the importance of eye contact, shaking hands, and asking interesting questions about the positions could be discussed. Then have participants take roles of both interviewer and interviewee to present a role play of a good interview.

Guest Speaker:

Invite guest speakers - former or current employed Talk Time members and their families - to discuss their job interview experiences. Have participants plan questions in advance to ask the guest speakers.

Closing Thoughts

Well, now you have heard it all - the best advice gathered from the experience of Talk Time program managers, coordinators, facilitators, and participants for over ten years in Washington state. The three program profiles in the last section demonstrate how program design differs to best meet the clearly defined goals of the specific group of participants. This book began by declaring that when you know who you want to serve in Talk Time, all of the elements for developing a successful Talk Time fall into place so you can:

- craft a clear program mission statement
- define the program's goals
- decide who could best become the volunteer facilitators
- determine where and how to attract them
- implement a variety of methods for supporting your volunteers
- plan the best ways to attract participants
- design stimulating Talk Time session topics and activities
- develop methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the programs

Best wishes for managing your dynamic Talk Time program by designing session plans that get everyone involved in enthusiastic conversations and coming back for more.